

THE MYTHING LINK



THE MYTHING LINK #17 is edited by Dave Hulan, PO Box 43, Monrovia, CA91016, and Gracia Fay Ellwood, 3433 Sycamore Dr., Los Angeles, Calif., and published by Dave Hulan, extraordinarily late, for distribution to a mailing list which has probably long since given up hope of ever seeing it. A Jøtun Publication.

Merlin's Cave

I could produce a number of excuses for the lateness of this issue of ML. After sixteen nice, clockworkly monthly issues #17 got itself delayed a little. I forget just what came up, a trip to England I think, followed by several other things that kept me from getting at it. By the time it had languished for a month and only half a dozen people really seemed to care, and I had gotten busy in a PFA production, I just never got around to it. After several months one of the few who did care, Laura Ruskin, volunteered to stencil everything that she could, which meant everything but my editorial. And she did, which accounts for the different typeface to be found elsewhere in the issue. Blessings on Laura, because without her help I wouldn't now be in a position to get the issue out by only typing a few stencils and then running them off.

Even with that much done (and 'twas done by around New Year's - of 1972, that is) I still couldn't overcome the inertia caused by such a long delay. I was still busy - I was the Chairman of the Westercon, and also was put in the position of ramrodding a PFA production if there was to be one this year at Mythcon (which was coincident with Westercon). Still, I could have stencilled two pages and run the zine off sometime over the eight or ten months the typed stencils have been sitting here. I managed to write over 150 pages on a novel, besides a couple of short stories, the scenario and lyrics of a musical comedy, and publish half a dozen fanzines for various apas - short fanzines, but still fanzines.

So I haven't really any excuse, and I offer sincere apologies to those people whose material appears here and especially to Gracia, my lovely and long-suffering co-editor, who wrote an excellent piece of humorous reportage which I then proceeded to bury completely. It would have been much better had it appeared when it was a fresh incident. But it is as true, and as funny, now as it was then, and the Red-bearded Nazgul tips his hood to the Lady of Elvenwood.

"There is a cobwebby grey velvet, with a tender bloom like cold gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth century, trimmed with Venetian leather and Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with something Japanese - it matters not what - would at least be Early English!" - Lady Jane, PATIENCE, W.S. Gilbert

This is, however, the last issue of MYTHING LINK, and is published more for the benefit of the contributors than anything else. The original idea behind ML was almost immediately lost when the number of branches exploded in early 1970 and all branches no longer discussed the same topic. The second idea, of publishing branch reports and letters and informal material of interest to the Mythopoeic Society, became somewhat redundant when MYTHPRINT started doing the same thing. We instituted comments on the branch reports in an effort to stimulate discussion of them, since the letters in MYTHPRINT did not often deal with such things. However, the sheer bulk of the branch reports started to make the fanzine prohibitively expensive and also more hard work than the interest shown justified. So there's not going to be another issue of MYTHING LINK. BUT...

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==/==FLASH!==/== GALEEN PEOPLES ABDUCTED! ==/==FLASH!==/==

Prominent Society Member Narrowly Escapes Death in Ghastly Ritual

IT WAS 9:25 A.M. on May 15, 1971. Three black-hooded and -cloaked figures mysteriously appeared in the alley behind 2516 Highland Avenue in Manhattan Beach. One of them, an old retired witch from Macbeth, was armed with a scimitar and had been rendered unhuman by a white stocking over her face. The second was a onetime actress in a Mary Worth comic strip who had not long before devoted her services to the Dark Lord but had so far been unable to shake off certain habits picked up in her role as Mrs. Worth. (She is known hereinafter as the Chickenhearted Nazgul.) The third, the Undergrown Nazgul, was also callow and untried in the ways of darkness. She hastily pulled her hood forward to hide shameful stray locks of golden curly hair.

The Chickenhearted Nazgul temporarily deposited a pink birthday cake on an unoccupied doorstep and stepped quickly away lest she be seen near such a thing.

The three skulked about for a time, hissing and adjusting black eyemasks, before they saw a fourth come floating up the hill. A frightening sight even to Nazgul, for this being had steel-grey hair down to its shoulders (The Authentic Nazgul). More skulking. The four were joined during the next half-hour by a Red-Bearded Nazgul, an unlikely looking figure in bluejeans and a blue shirt carrying a bullwhip who was hastily bundled into a black sweater and cloak (The Quick-Change Nazgul), and a terrifying Nine-Foot Nazgul with no part of a face showing at all. Every now and then a Fifth-Column Nazgul would emerge from the back door of 2516 Highland Avenue to give progress reports on the activities of the intended Victim:

"I slipped it into his pants pocket while he was in the shower," or "He's finished with breakfast now, and is out on the front porch," or the like.

FINALLY the eight conspirators hissingly welcomed the ninth, (the Turncoat Nazgul) who explained with some embarrassment that his vehicle had broken down. He was sternly admonished to get a horse, but probably has not done so for reasons hereinafter explained. He was seen hastily tucking a white garment into the closet of his white van.

Finally the nine, led by the Fifth-Column N., filed their way up the steps along the side of the house in question. (It was observed that the terrifying impact of the Nine-Foot N. was somewhat diminished by the fact

that he could hardly see where he was going.) After another brief hissed conference the Fifth-Column N. opened a side door and led the way in. The Intended Victim was discover'd sitting on a windowseat unsuspectingly reading a book. He looked up apprehensively from one to another of the masked figures approaching and semi-circling him, bullwhip and swords gesturing threateningly. He counted:

"Uh-huh. Nine. Uh-huh. I thought when I got up that this was going to be a good day."

He was pulled to his feet and searched by the Nine-Foot N., who suddenly shrieked and held aloft...a shining gold Ring. Reaching, hissing and keening followed. The Victim gestured toward invisible TV cameras and proclaimed,

"This is my world, and welcome to it!"

"Tie its hands behind its back," whisspered the Red-Bearded N. Thereupon the Victim's hands and feet were bound with long strips of black cloth, provided by the Chickenhearted N. on the (unfortunately untested) theory that they would cause less discomfort to the Victim than ropes. He was also blindfolded. Either because he was frozen with fear or because of curiosity about what would happen next, the Victim neglected to offer any resistance to these indignities. As he was hoisted onto the shoulders of the various larger Nazgul he was heard to make some remark in questionable taste regarding a dream that he had been kidnapped in Maidenform shorts. Just as he was being carried out the door, a mournful voice from across the room called out "Goodby, Galen...." to which he replied sadly, "Goodby, Mother...."

The weaker Blackguards nearly relented then and there.

With much puffing and panting on the part of his captors he was carried up the alley, followed by many goggle-eyed heads leaning out of windows, and deposited laboriously in the back of the Turncoat N.'s van which had been made up into a bed. The ride began.

Throughout the whole event the kidnappers were observed to speak only of the Victim, never to him. The principle was violated almost at once by the Chick~~en~~hearted N., who noticed that he must be very uncomfortable lying on his back with his hands beneath him. She surreptitiously whispered in his ear, "Galen, it's going to be a long ride. Would you rather lie on your side or your stomach?"

He whispered back, "No."

The reason for this austerity was soon discovered; before long a sharp eye observed that he had nearly freed his hands. He was forcibly turned over and retied, only to get completely free within as short a time. After three or four such incidents it was fortunately discovered that cold fingertips suddenly applied to his ribs would make him writhe in a quite unaccountable fashion, and put a halt to all struggles. At this point scruples were cast aside and his hands were bound very tightly indeed, with the result that circulation promptly stopped. The Chickenhearted N.

motioned to the retired Witch, and these two chafed his hands from time to time when the others were not looking.

To beguile the time and prevent the Victim from becoming bored, various tantalizing details about his approaching fate were allowed to slip in loud whispers.

"Did anyone remember to bring the shovel?"

"No. When there is no corpse, there is no need for a shovel."

"Ah, but we do need the shovel. For a very small hole."

"Save me the fingers."

"I'll have the tongue."

"We'll fill its eyes with sand!"

"Pull out its fingernails!"

"I want the little finger! Now!"

"No, you fool! Wait until we roast it...."

"Medium rare for me."

"Check the kerosene."

"Where is the box of ants?"

"Aha....here it is."

"Open it. By its neck....Hungry, aren't you, my pretties? Five....ten....fifteen. The rest of you must wait. It won't be long!"

The point of the scimitar was placed in the Victim's hand for his tactile perusal. Then the Quick-Change . gave him a foretaste of sharp joys to come with the point of his cloak clasp. The Chickenhearted N. put a stop to this at once.

Foiled in his attempts at physical resistance, the Victim launched a magical attack. "Elbereth Gilthoniel!"

Hisses.

"Prodo! Aragorn! Gandalf!"

More and louder hisses.

"Sauron! Saruman!"

Cheers.

"Tolkien! Lewis! Williams!"

Hisses and growls.

"Ash nazg durbatuluk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatuluk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul."

Cheers.

"Nixon! Agnew!"

Cheers.

The Victim had about run out of power-words and bad puns by the time the kidnap vehicle stopped at a semi-remote wooded area barred only by a few picnic tables. As he was being carried up a hill to his appointed place of death he made another attempt at magical resistance, willing himself to become heavier and heavier. And heavier and heavier he became until all his five carriers, even the two at his knees and feet, were on the point of extreme exhaustion.

"Stop!" called the Red-Bearded N., and the Victim was dropped. "Untie his feet." This was done, and the rest of the way he walked.

About at this time the Turncoat N. dropped out of sight; his name has been stricken from all the records of Darkness.

Blackguards were overcome and fell. The Retired Witch appeared to be dead, but when the Good Knight came near she grabbed his leg and attempted to pull him down. He devastated her with the Sign. Then the Turncoat and the Good Knight began the formidable task of unbinding the Victim, the fervency of whose thanks betrayed his earlier feelings. When he was loose at last the Turncoat arrayed him in a white fur cloak and announced,

"We, the Forces of Light, have won the victory over the Forces of Darkness. You are now Free, White and Twenty-One."

A throne was set for him, and the would-be Victim took his seat. He was awarded three round medals. The first was adorned with the mythopoeic Symbol and the word "Hero"; the second read "Galen Lives," and the third, "Support Your Local Peoples." He was now given the well-earned task of deciding the fate of the Baddies.

"Different punishments for different crimes," he decreed. "Out of our great largesse we pardon four of you. But you (pointing to the Nine-Foot N.), you (the Quick-Change N.), you (the Undergrown N.), and especially you (the Fifth-Column N.), come here!"

The first of these unfortunates was condemned to grovel on the ground until his excessive pride and arrogance should be abased. The second, third and fourth were condemned to chase up and down the hill until they fell exhausted.

These sentences, however, were commuted.

During the Judgement one of the unpunished four (the Authentic N.), burning with thoughts of Revenge, escaped her captors and crept slowly up behind the Hero. Then with lightning motion her arm flashed out and grabbed him around the neck. At the same time, the Turncoat crept silently up behind her. With lightning motion his arm flashed out and grabbed her around the neck, together with the firm application of a knee to the small of her back. In no time at all she had unhandled the Hero and found herself flat on her back with a heavy foot on her midsection. She made a few feeble attempts to rise but soon gave up all thoughts of revenge. The Retired Witch, who by now was of the same mind, croaked to the Good Knight,

"Let there be peace betwixt thy race and mine."

So a Great Peace was decreed. With malice toward none, with charity toward all, heroes and Nazgul alike retired to the picnic tables to decimate the aforementioned pink birthday cake and some carry-out dinners that were later carried in. (It was announced at dinner that one of the chief architects of the day's activities--a Ringleader, so to speak--had unfortunately been unable to attend. She was given three cheers and one banzai.

Some presents were opened by the Hero. Afterwards there was much good talk, a little dancing and some singing with guitars. As he was leaving the hero was heard to remark, with tragic grandeur, that he anticipated another Ordeal at age 33--one from which there would be no rescue.

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LOOKING BACK on the whole event, as a seasoned felon I find that several salient points could be mentioned for the benefit of any others who aspire to crime of this sort. The main one is: Don't. There's gotta be an easier way to make a living. You'll be all over bruises the next day.

However, if you are determined to go ahead: for any Victim over ninety pounds, forget about trying to copy the Dead March in Hamlet. Let him walk.

Don't try to use cloth for bonds in the name of humanity, especially not slippery cloth. Use cable or something. And don't let him hold his hands palm-to-palm; make sure his wrists are crossed.

If your Victim is an outrageous punster bring either ear cotton or a gag.

Anybody wanna buy some slightly used cloaks at Mythcon III?

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Los Angeles, February 5, 1972

KIDNAP GANG STRIKES AGAIN!

This afternoon at 3:15, cloaked baddies abducted the Good Knight, his bride the Lady Bonnie, and their unborn child. The recently-married couple was forced at scimitar-pitchfork-and umbrella-point into a van and spirited off to the gang's secret headquarters, where others had prepared a table for them. They were roped to the rough planks and made to listen as various evilly-dressed, snarling and howling tormentors jeered at them and made the most horrible threats. Despite pleas from the Lady Bonnie (the Good Knight himself maintained heroic silence), the inhuman ritual went forward, to serve the helpless victims for the annual graduation banquet for the College of Demons.

The guest speaker, a prominent instructor at the College, gave the keynote address, deploring the way the world has worsened since the ilk of these two insufferably good victims could be sent to the arena.

"In past banquets," he commented, "the gastronomic quality may have been wretched, but we never had souls--of a sort--in more abundance. Ah, but now this triumph! You youngsters not yet on active service may wonder with what labor and delicate skill these two miserable creatures were finally captured. Actually, we cheated. We grabbed them."

The Lady Bonnie, he called "a vile, sneaky, simpering demure, mouselike, watery, insignificant bread-and-butter Myths. Looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, yet has a satirical wit. Two-faced little cheat--the sort who'd find me funny!"

The speaker, the Dishon. Mr. Screwtape, next reviled the Good Knight. "This man is a dangerous influence! He infects everyone to strive for higher goods! He is loved--yes, loved--by everyone. This man has formed a dangerous sect on earth. A sect up to no good at all--it spreads Joy! Great Beelzebub, the horrid noise of Joy that he causes! Joy is a direct insult to the realism, dignity and austerity of Hell."

His remarks were punctuated by screeches of approval, ghastly laughs, applause and the bold repartee of the Lady Bonnie, who warned the gathering, "We'll give you indigestion!" and made other sarcastic comments throughout the speech.

"Therefore, my friends," Screwtape remarked in conclusion, "we are about to destroy these, our enemies, and along with them their horrid, joyous Mythopoeic Society. We shall establish in its place the Miserific Society, dedicated to hatred, gloom, sadness, and the spread of the worship of Our Father Below!"

Amid the general cheering at the mention of the Arch-Fiend, the Lady Bonnie inquired, "By the way, what do you have to say about that one? What's it done to you yet, huh?"

The laughter subsided briefly as if each demon remembered he or shee, too, once had a mother. But the lapse of resolve was broken by a cry resembling "It's a duck!"

"It's a what?" cried the Lady Bonnie, aghast.

"It's of noble stock," the voice from the mob repeated, "it must be dealt away with!"

The speaker then gave the toast of the Miserific Society and of Our Father Below, and invited all, "Let us dig in!"

Drooling and snarling, the horde pressed forward around the table, brandishing whatever they had to brandish.

A sudden loud shriek cut into the slavering and muttering, echoed by another, further off in the distance. But in a moment the demoniac host set to again. More screams; everyone exclaimed in shock and surprise, as celestial music filtered through the crowd.

"Music!" wailed one of the crowd, "and silence!"

Three nebulous figures now materialized upon the scene: the awesome Nine-Foot Oyarsa, flanked by the Greater and Lesser Eldila. Shedding their majesty all about them, they drifted toward the horde of demons, who flinched, cowered and moaned before them as the music ascended.

"In the Old Nick of time," the Lady Bonnie sighed, "I was almost spent." Then she beheld the Nine-Foot Oyarsa as he bent to unbind her. "It's too late; we're mad!" Turning to the Good Knight, she asked, "How does it feel to be dead, Glen?"

The Nine-Foot Oyarsa spoke words of power and enabled the victims to arise from their table of horror. Their work done, the Three evanesced away as they had come, leaving the entire scene to stunned amazement as demons recalled that they were actually people, and the victims made sure they were still in the flesh.

Cool drinks were served to demons who had parched their throats hissing and wailing, while the near-main courses were generally lionized.

The Good Knight, after regaining his composure, frankly admitted he was speechless. "It was one of those times--there were so many beautiful straight lines when I could have said something, but I didn't. Well, I will say the day did have its serious side--I went through a real Charles Williams exchange experience along the way." He explained having his face in his hands during the speech. "Well, I've always thought that's how I would behave if I were captured in the jungle. You know, maybe if you close your eyes it'll all go away?"

Bonnie remarked that the first thing entering her mind

when she saw Gracia-Jay's chalk-white face was, "That's funny, Gracia doesn't usually have things up when she walks in the door."

Glenn's first thought as the group crowded in was, "They're here! Oh, oh! I hope we don't have to go to Griffith Park." (He suspected they might be hauled seven times around the block and back to Michel Delving, but being blindfolded, had no idea where they actually went.)

(An interesting sidelight developed: as the abduction was in its final stages of preparation, and Gracia-Jay waited to begin her part, a ruse of meeting Bonnie to go shopping, Bonnie called Gracia. People were chattering and trying out the music part of the program; Gracia nearly panicked for fear Bonnie might hear the noise and suspect something. As it turned out, Bonnie only made out a mishmash in the background, thought the Society might be having a "do," but otherwise suspected nothing. Her mind was preoccupied with her green velvet tunic.)

The Good Knight denied that the Bubble-Up he clutched during the ride had any esoteric significance, other than as the "staff of life," or, as it were, a chalice-image.

Planning of the abduction took about two weeks. As the Lady Bonnie remarked, "We haven't been keeping the Society busy enough! They're getting bored!"

As the festivities began to ebb, the Good Knight was heard to comment, "We're missing dinner."

"You are not Empyrean. You are not Della Cruscan. You are not even Early English. Oh, be Early English ere it is too late!" - Lady Saphir, PATIENCE

However, lately there has been something of a groundswell of public opinion among those who remember MYTHING LINK as it partially was back in its earlier days, to the effect that there is a need within the Society for a freely-edited, informal, unofficial publication wherein the members can make their voices heard saying whatever they feel like, whether it's complimentary or otherwise to the Three Authors, the Society, or the publication itself. This is not to be construed necessarily as criticism of MYTHPRINT. Every fanzine editor has a right to his own style of editing. Some editors prefer to stress only positive things, and that's a legitimate approach. Some - among whom I am numbered - thrive on controversy, and are likely as not to say highly outrageous things (or print highly outrageous things that others say) simply to stir others into replying to them. And so on. I try to keep personalities out of it, but outside of that practically anything goes. If you want to make out a case that LOTR is a Gay Lib novel (it's been done, though not in my zine, I'm sorry to say), go to it - though you'd better be prepared to back up your judgment, because most of my readership is going to have something approaching idolatry for JRRT. (If, on the other hand, you want to say that the Registrar of the Santa Teresa Branch is absconding with the dues, or the Moderator of the Pacific Point Branch is anti-Semitic, that's tabu. I don't want libel suits. If it amounts to saying that the Prime Pumper of Pumperdink is incompetent, well - that will depend on whether your argument is persuasive or not. If it gives the Prime Pumper specific charges - which aren't libellous - to answer, then I think yes, I'd print it. If it were reasonably relevant to something having to do with the fanzine. And anything, in order to be printed, has to be within my definition of the term "literate", or convertible to literacy with minimum effort on my part.

(continued on page 11)

The Mirror of Galadriel

The words you are now perusing, Gentle Reader, are not those originally planned for the Mirror in YFAL G LILK 17. Whatever was written in those far-off days of June, A.D. 1971, has fallen into oblivion. The reason therefor is as follows: During August I decided to amplify something I had written about Arnica that, it had occurred to me, was likely to cause misunderstanding. So at my request Dave returned the page in question at the August Lydgard meeting. I put it in my purse, where it docilely remained for several weeks. But alas, when I reached for it yesterday it was nowhere to be found. Nor was it in my desk or (a remote chance) in Robert's. So I am facing the very interesting challenge of trying to figure out how on earth I began the sentence that carried over to the next page--"with needs and hungers and fears and that there is often not enough goods to go around, or time or knowledge or love." Let's see, it was part of a reply to my respected co-editor's remarks in 116 about Divine Prohibitions (in re Ferelandra), and very negative remarks they were too. He is turned off to the idea that the Deity might make certain prohibitions which in themselves had no meaning, simply to test implicit obedience.

Dave's sentiments were once eloquently expressed by a notable literary figure (with a less developed superego):

....Knowledge forbidd'n?

Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
Envie them that?....

Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with Gods....

---which makes it difficult indeed to justify the ways of God to men. However, with no middle flight let me attempt: The concept of the prohibition makes some sense only when seen in the context of humanness as finitude. We are finite, limited, and thus much of the suffering in the world. What a different place it would be if eating were not a necessity, both for people and animals. If parents were not limited in their resources and energies and insights, and could supply all the needs of their children for love. If we weren't limited in knowledge about the future--the plane that was going to crash, or the fatal earthquake that was going to happen, or the stupidities that would lead to a world war. Et cetera, et cetera.

Classically, the urge to rise beyond finitude, hubris, arouses the envy of the gods who punish such presumption with a painful fall. Man can at best be beautiful in his attempt. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition the situation is not quite the same. This tradition expresses rather more clearly the basic insight of the hero-myth: that the willing acceptance of finitude at its ultimate extremes of pain and death, heroism, becomes the means to the overcoming of finitude, Resurrection. Prohibitions, along with the ordinary frustrations and irritations and disappointments

that finitude brings in daily life, provide a kind of school for heroism. (It can, that is.)

(Well, I didn't succeed in linking up to that impossible sentence fragment. You, Gentle Reader, are welcome to try for yourself.)

with needs and hungers and fears, and that there is often not enough goods to go around, or time or knowledge or love. I think one of the purposes of being a finite human being is that by taking on the challenge of learning to love under these conditions, we have a chance at heroism. By resisting a temptation--by saying no to oneself when it would be valid to say yes--we can gain strength and stature on the way towards an achievement like Christ's--or if you prefer, Hirohito's. A God whose aim in setting prohibitions was to turn us into people of that sort would not be called petty.

(I don't mean to say that this is a full vindication of finitude. The sum total of suffering it entails has certainly not yet been justified in words.)

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In regard to the danger that ~~THE~~ ~~EARLY~~ ~~ENGLISH~~ ~~SOCIETY~~ might lead to a substantial increase in interreligious ill-will: I'm not too worried. Any readers won't go beyond the obvious analogies--to azis and Satanists. azis are hardly to be found anymore and Satanists are pretty rare as well. Of course the sort of people who are going to bite down into some comparatively innocent group or movement and call it of the devil will always be with us, but most of them don't like using their minds, and I doubt that many of them would stick with Lewis very long. I may be wrong. Maybe the only way to settle the question is to take a poll.

"It's clear that mediaeval art alone retains its zest,/ To charm and please its devotees we've done out little best./ We're not quite sure if all we do has the Early English ring;/ But, as far as we can judge it's something like this sort of thing:" - Duke, Colonel, and Major, PATIENCE

If you haven't gathered from all the quotes I've tossed about so far, the title of the new publication will be EARLY ENGLISH (or EE or E² if you prefer to abbreviate). The specific title was of course suggested by the references from PATIENCE, a G&S operetta satirizing the Pre-Raphaelites (or more accurately their uncritical imitators and admirers), but after I thought of it I began to find it Fraught With ~~Abstruse~~ ~~Utter~~ Significance, and the more I thought about it the better I liked it. So, that'll be the title. I deliberately avoided anything with "Myth" in the title to be sure that this would not be confused with an official Society publication, because if response is good enough to justify more than two or three issues I expect Society officialdom not to like it at all. One of the problems ML had was its anomalous status as sort of affiliated with the Society but not under its complete control. This was not satisfactory for either me or the Society. EARLY ENGLISH, although primarily directed toward Society members, has no official or unofficial connection with the Mythopoeic Society.

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BRANCH MEETING REPORTS

ANN ARBOR (Galadhremmin Ennorath), reported by Sylvia Smith
Met May 31, discussion topic WAR IN HEAVEN by Charles Williams

We recognized that the book presents one battle of the whole war. We analyzed the components of this battle:

Who were the combatants? We tried to separate the forces but found only a few clearly committed individuals. Many characters were questionable; some were simply out of (this) confrontation, e.g. Batesby.

What were the objectives? Clearly, this is no human war in which the objective of both parties is the same plot of ground. Delight is on one side, destruction on the other. On God's side one does not work against anything, but he is for.

What were the weapons? The power of ritual, the power of personalities, and the most important, the Grail. Satanists cannot create energy; they can only use it, so they wanted the Grail. Prester John, who is the Grail, seems to be both a combatant and a weapon--perhaps the Holy Spirit.

What was the outcome? The fate of many of the characters was unresolved at this point in the war. We thought that Williams gave a number of indications that Persimmons received salvation. Yet we were rather uncomfortable with a theology that could call a Satanist a seeker after God.

((What indications? His collapse at the end of the attempted "marriage" doesn't say as much to me. He can be religious--have numinous awe--without being a seeker after God.---GFE))

LA MIRADA-WHITTIER (Archenland), reported by Laura Ruskin
Met May 8th, discussion topic THE GOLDEN ASS or THE METAMORPHOSES of Lucius Apuleius

At first we exchanged our impressions of this and that episode from the novel. The events related were so wild that the question arose of why Apuleius survived until modern times, inasmuch as no one today would take them seriously.

Someone remarked over tea that Apuleius' characters were everyday and lifelike; real people for all that they lived in a world where one's neighbor might be a witch and one's donkey a luckless young traveler. Lucius' people could live and be recognized in any age, went this opinion. Comparisons were made between Lucius' Philebus and today's "Krishna crowd;"

Thrasylus' street gang with "West Side Story" types; and legionaries who are never around when you need them but always when you could do without, and certain other representatives of higher authority. Another opinion held this very "common man" quality a drawback in Apuleius, in that it held the novel back from the ideal, archetypal heights reached in LoTR. In LoTR, it was argued, you meet people who by and large are better than those commonly met in life, and vastly better than the characters in Apuleius. The characters in LoTR are as it were magnetized by powerful opposing poles of cosmic order and disorder, their lives harnessed to causes beyond themselves. The characters in Apuleius go each his own way; good people like Charite are driven to cruelty and vengeance while frauds like Philebus make a living from displaying how "committed" they are to their Syrian Goddess. In this view, such characters detracted from the mythopoeia in the GOLDEN ASS.¹

There ensued forthwith a short and hot debate, rescued only by a hasty and temporary change of the subject to OZ.

We took up the question of Christianity and Apuleius. Writing in the second century A.D., he seemed to disparage the belief, if the baker's wife is to be taken as a Christian. However, the baker himself displays Christian forgiveness and good temper toward those who wrong him, although he is a pagan. For his pains, he is done to death by witchcraft.²

and other murderous women--Meroe, Pamphile, Arete and Psyche's two jealous sisters--seem to represent incarnate evil in THE GOLDEN ASS. The question was raised whether Pamphile's maidservant Potis, who caused Lucius so much woe, was herself an apprentice witch who knew what she was doing all the time. These evil women incarnated the dark side of Artemis, or Hecate. Charite, Psyche, Byrrhaena and the matron showed the bright side of the Moon-Goddess, or Isis, the first deity to which Lucius was converted. The seasonal blooming of the roses Lucius needed was related to the astrological significance of his initiation into the mysteries of Isis. Lucius' prayer to Isis seemed the most "Christian" episode in the book, at least in spirit as it suggested in tone the Medieval adoration of the Virgin.³

All this time, the conversation covered threes in Lucius (how many threes in LoTR?), deus otiosus, did Kronos marry his mother? (No, he did not; his sister Rhea was the mother of the first Olympians; Gaea was his mother.) Why some people want to fly--Britishers are still offering thousands of pounds to some modern Icarus--Why some people wonder why other people want to fly--what is salvation, anyway? Didn't Lucius make a jackass of himself before using the ointment--as in his drunken attack on three shadowy

figures and the consequences thereof? And how did Lucius' character develop while he was a jackass? We observed how he ran to put his nose into the business of a witch, knowing very well how such ladies rewarded similar prying, but towards the end of his enchantment had actually learned not to bite the hand that bought him, but to accept his lot and the will of the gods.

Following up on the Cupid and Psyche myth, the branch will discuss Till We Have Faces in June. Someone found a survival of the myth in the fairy-story, The Green Snake. In discussing what topic to have for July--it will be a Tolkien theme--we found ourselves discussing the topic itself. After more spiced tea and OZ trivia, we filed out into the night, bidding our hosts the Barretts good speed as they move to Chico. Let's see; that will be branch number...

(1. It seems to me that life-like characters probably detract from the mythic quality of a work, without necessarily detracting from its quality as a work of art. While we are the Mythopoeic Society, myth isn't the only form literature can take nor even necessarily the highest /and that could be the source of a whole vast argument in itself--which I'll take up if and when anyone wants to argue either side of the question, but not until I know someone is interested in discussing it.../; THE GOLDEN ASS has lasted far longer than LOTR likely will, though it is probably not as mythic. 2. Although Christianity teaches forgiveness /and a few Christians practice it/ the teaching is hardly to be characterized as "Christian"--it's hard to find a serious system of ethics, religious or humanist, that doesn't teach the same thing. 3. Probably because the Virgin-cult of early Christianity was largely borrowed from the Isis cult. General. I wish that you hadn't left unanswered so many interesting questions. (What did the Archenlanders think salvation was, for instance?--DGA)

((I don't think lifelike characters detract from the mythic quality of a work provided there are also characters of great stature, and the two types are skillfully related. For example, the lifelike Hobbits go out of their sheltered land into a world of giant events /the relationship is really delightful at the wreck of Isengard and the healing of Merry/; the English children step through a wardrobe or door or picture frame into the world of Aslan and the itches et. al. Or, a character might start out life-size and grow into heroic stature. 3A. Many other mother goddess cults also entered into it, and were distilled through the cult of later Ecclesia before becoming that of the Virgin. I have a feeling that by the time you reach the high Middle Ages the influence of Isis is rather tenuous.---GFE))

CHANCE COUNTY (Bucklebury) reported by Anne Osborn
met April 24, topic The Place of the Lion by Charles Williams

The place of the lion is in the Lamb. Power misused is a major theme in Williams' novels, and the powers here are amoral and almost out of control. Damaris' primeval pterodactyl counterpoints Anthony's eagle as elements that they rule and could be ruled by, with less wisdom. God works through man, Anthony saw, to dominate the animals and maintain harmony among species. The luscious imagery (who but Williams could perceive that the archetypal nature of Butterfly is lumber?), tightly woven plot, compelling characters and evanescent Sennsucht impulse make this book irresistible to the mythopoeia fancier.

Williams parallels Tolkien with his eagle and pterodactyl contrast. He parallels Lewis perfectly between Damaris and Jane Studdock of That Hideous Strength. Both women had an inner horror of confronting the truth of their selfish lives, as well as a blatant fear of confronting the terrible powers before them. Strong sexual symbolism surges through the conversions of both women.

The Great Pit which Anthony confronts seems to be the extremely archaic (in Platonic sense) Place of the Celestials. Here Williams drives deepest into philosophical and metaphysical thickets, never repeats himself, and loses some readers. The burning of the house, too, is difficult to fathom, even given that it was, through Berrigan, the spontaneous conjunction between the realms of matter and anti-matter. The tongues of flame that some perceived around the house were akin to the invisible flame that only mystics can see, the Confirmation of the Apostles, and the Burning Bush. The Great Day Dance of the Lion, the Lamb, Quentin and Damaris is the easiest Biblical allegory and the richest visual imagery. (It was intimated that if Anthony was the Eagle and Richardson the Unicorn, Quentin must have been the Essential Rabbit.)

Richardson and Damaris' father (the Abelard figure) stopped living for the same reason: to move on to the Angelic Realm. Does this stoppage equal the suicide forbidden to Christians, or is it one more advancement in the continuum of man's eternal life? The flesh binds us from God; is there a positive escape we can make to Him, in an excess of hope instead of the excess of despair that usually characterizes suicide? After all, the Phoenix burns voluntarily to renew itself. (Does the flesh bind us from God? Why? God is immanent. He is in and through all of His creation, which includes the flesh; if anything separates us from God it is our wills to be separate from Him, and not our flesh. I know of no reason to believe that anyone who is bound from God in the flesh will not be equally bound from Him after his death. I'm not sure you're even giving sound Christian doctrine there, and I'm very sure I don't believe it.--DGH) ((He either...--GFE))

CORANGE COUNTY (Bucklebury), reported by Anne Osborn
let May 22, topic The Book of Three by Lloyd Alexander

We like Alexander! Tried manfully to discuss only Book of 3 and avoid other books in series.¹ Paula told us much of the Sow Goddess on whom Men-Wen is based: in Welsh legend she represented the moon, motherhood, the life-giver. Pigs were introduced late to Welsh agriculture: they were expensive, kept by kings, and the sacred wizards who read their oracular pronouncements were called pig-keepers!² The horned King symbol is used frequently elsewhere, recently in Garner and Treece. Taran and Eilonwy are hardly even likeable in this first volume: arrogant, immature, stubborn, they are like most children here. Comparisons to Tolkien are inevitable, and Alexander does not come out equal to J.R.R. here; to some, he is a half-baked imitation in this first book, though all agree that Alexander finds his own style and stride as the books commence. Gurgi is blatantly Gollum at first, though he becomes more like Sam ("the classic faithful sidekick"). Medwyn is much like Bombadil in that he has not lost the ancient elemental union with animals (but he is in fact a oh). Gwydion in his powers and majesty resembles Galadriel. (3) The Mazgul steeds and gwythaints are alike, though perhaps gwythaints are more satisfyingly subtle in that their power resides almost geographically with their master. Achren is comparable to Saruman in being tricked off the throne, her own powers used to betray her. Dallben and Cair Dallben are like Elrond and Rivendell.

Perhaps the one truly original Alexandrian creation and characterization is F. Fflam and his Truthful Harp, for which we agree that L.A. should get the Aslan, the annual award given by the NPS for best mythopoeic creation.⁴ Fflam brings to mind the White Knight from Through the Looking Glass, Danny Kaye, Barliman Butterbur, the Duke of Windsor, Gary Cooper, and King Pellinore from The Once and Future King, but he is none of these so much as himself. (1 lb. presweetened coconut, 2 egg whites, ¼ cup sugar, tsp. vanilla, pinch salt and baking powder, bake 20 min. at 325° for incredibly good macaroons. Freeze well before eating.)

(1. Everyone has had that problem that has discussed BOOK OF THREE. 2. Yes, according to the ABRACADABRA /and THE ISLAND OF THE DRAGON/ the pigs were the gift of - Arawn. But then Arawn, in the ABRACADABRA, wasn't an evil character. Alexander modified him much more than he did Gwydion. 3. I should have said that he much more resembled Aragorn. He doesn't go all the way back to the beginning of time like Galadriel, and his nature is much more the go-out-and-do-something of Aragorn rather than the sit-home-and-protect-and-advise of Galadriel. But in fact he much resembles himself in the Welsh legends, and there is no need to feel that he was modeled on anyone in Tolkien. 4. If Aslans had been given in 1964 you might be right /I don't know what else was written that year/. However, I don't think Alexander had anything published in 1970 or 1971, which last is the year Aslans are being awarded for this mythcon, and certainly

not a Tflan adventure. Sorry about that.--DGE)

SA BBRADENC-SIDE (Lantern aste) reported by Dianne LeRoy
et April 17, topic TAR IN LEAVE by Charles Williams

It had been a rainy day, but the heavens ceased long enough for a goodly group of us to congregate at Mike Mielnik's pad. Our moderator was unable to be there until late in the meeting so we discussed the subject as best we could, sometimes jumping from topic to topic and back again.

One question that was asked was, "Why the title Jar in Heaven?" No one seemed to have an answer. We went on to define the characters: Prestor John, also described as Gandalfian, was a legendary medieval Christian priest and king who was supposed to spread Christianity to all of the areas which the apostles could not reach. Manasseh derives his name from anasseh, the worst king of Israel, who sawed Isaiah in half. (1) Sir Giles Fumulty's last name implies a violent agitation of mind or feelings.

The archdeacon seemed to be more of a Taoist in his approach to life. (A)

The ointment used by Stephen Persimmons (B) was suggested to be aconite, an ointment from bulb plants which chews the nerve endings and causes hallucinations. (2)

Then we got into a discussion on evil. Williams' view of evil in this book is destruction and negation. We compared this with George MacDonald's view in which evil is a negation of God, although everyone is given an eternity in which to be saved.

Last of all, it was pointed out that in the last scene the universality of the mass was shown, by having people from many ages and places participating. (1. Manasseh was king of Judah /the Southern Kingdom/ and not Israel /the Northern Kingdom - or the original united kingdom/. And it is questionable whether or not he was the worst; there were some pretty rotten ones, and anasseh is depicted in tradition as having repented in the end. The "Prayer of Manasseh" in the Apocrypha is one of the finer prayers of penitence we have on record. /Picky, picky.../ 2. The witch-ointment definitely contained belladonna, whose active ingredient atropine can cause hallucinations; aconite is another good hallucinogen /and fairly deadly poison; its refined form, aconitine, is just about the fastest-killing poison in the pharmacopia. We detective-story freaks learn a lot about poisons in the course of time.../ and this particular ointment must have contained something even more spectacular. Otherwise the effects would have worn off eventually. Lethal poisons may kill or permanently disable, but they don't keep you mad for days after which you suddenly recover with no ill effects when Prester John gives you the good office...--DGE)

((A. More of a Taoist than a Christian? How? This statement calls for some development & support. B. You mean Gregory Persimmons.--GFE))

SAN BERNARDINO-RIVERSIDE (Lantern Waste), Dianne Le Roy reportg.
Met May 15, discussion topic Phantastes by George MacDonald

We had a small group this meeting which we attributed to the fact that some of the members took part in the joyful Renaissance Faire.

Brent Carlowe led the discussion which began with a reading of a section from Phineas Fletcher's poem, "The Purple Island." At the beginning of Phantastes there is a brief quotation from it:

Phantastes (fantasy) from 'their first'
all shapes deriving,
In new habiliments can
quickly light.

The story is described as a very moral tale of goodness about a young man following a path to a reunion with his soul. The young man's name is Anodos (Greek for the Pathless, he who has not found his way in life). Anodos went to Faerieland to find his purpose. In Faerieland he meets an old woman with young eyes who lives on an island (fetus) connected to the mainland (mother) by a thin strip of land (umbilical cord). This dream image is suggested to be a wish fulfillment for MacDonald himself who lost his own mother at an early age. Another interpretation sees her as a symbol of Mother Earth. It is significant to note that Anodos comes to her after he has committed suicide by jumping into the sea. After his jump he found himself riding in a boat covered by the purple mantle of death. The boat trip which takes him to the island is suggestive of reincarnation.

The scene with the priests before a dummy or false god reflects MacDonald's own charge of heresy. The shadow that attaches itself to Anodos was said to be pride. The breaking of the beautiful globe of the young girl is suggested by one critic to be a rape scene. Later in the story this same girl comes to him and frees him by her song from a prison tower. Since he could have walked out at any time, Judy like said, he was walled in by his own self illusion.

In the following statement George MacDonald seems to describe the immortality of the soul: "He has begun a story without a beginning and it will never have any end." With this I shall end my report.

SAN DIEGO (Cair Paravel), reported by Jeannie Peacock
Met May 8, topic "The Significance of San Gagee in LORD OF THE RINGS"

The May meeting of the San Diego Branch got off to a rip-roaring start with a record crowd of six attending. The first suggestion made was that Sanwise was basically something of a "bumpkin". This triggered a fierce semantic argument over the precise definition of "bumpkin". Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word as: "1. Bumpkin...an awkward, unsophisticated rustic, 2. Bumpkin or buarkin...the projecting boom of a ship."

(We must make it a point of order at the next meeting to ask Pam ay to which definition she was referring.)

Sam is an intensely loyal individual. His loyalty, in fact, is his strongest characteristic. His love for Frodo becomes even greater as Tolkien's work progresses. This point raised the question: would Frodo have left the Shire and continued his journey had it not been for Sam? (We never reached a definite conclusion but it's a good question.)

Is Sam so overshadowed by Frodo as to be seemingly inferior? There appears to be a "class consciousness" represented in the Shire. Does this influence the relationship between Frodo and Sam or is the power of the Ring the chief factor in inflating Frodo's ego? (This branch is great for posing questions and never finding answers!) (1)

After the arrival of three late members, Sam's role in the Destruction of the Ring was discussed. Sam is highly instrumental in getting the Ring up the mountainside, but ironically enough it is neither Frodo nor Sam, but Gollum who is directly responsible for the final destruction.

We revived the question of whether or not Frodo would have successfully completed his journey without Sam. The general opinion was that he probably could not. Sam, however, is considered by the other hobbits to be nearly as strange as "those Bagginses". This is illustrated by his argument with Ted Sandyman. Sam claims that many strange creatures have been seen coming through the Shire. (Scott Shaw suggested that these were fairies. Was that a derogatory comment??) Although Frodo and Sam are both considered "different", Gandalf realizes that they possess the necessary strength to bear the burden of the Ring.

The significance of the name Sam Gamage was discussed. It was compared to such relevant things as chewing gum brands, wooden legs(?) and Mike Penberton's security blanket, "Gee". At this point we decided the whole thing was getting too ridiculous, and after Donna McGary (our illustrious moderator) summarized, we decided to give up. Donna informed us we were "officially adjourned." (I don't pretend to settle the matter authoritatively, but it seems to me that Sam Gamage definitely exhibits all the characteristics of the traditional English servant class. Furthermore, the way his Gaffer talks indicates that this is the case. To the classic English servant, the quality were as much above him as the angels; they were not mere humans (or hobbits). It is very difficult to communicate that sort of thing to someone who hasn't seen it; California is not a status society, and now that I've started trying I find that I can't put it into terms that convey my meaning. I did grow up in a status society, and I understand the Sam-Frodo relationship very well - but from inside, and I discover that I can't put it into words.---DGH)

S. M. BARBARA (Battle Hill), reported by Joyce E. Lucas
on April 24, discussion topic Voyage to Arcturus by
David Lindsey, however, many members were unable to
obtain copies.

Certainly this book was not as readily available as
the 11th Seeker. (1) As a consequence the discussion
wandered to a number of topics.

The U.C.S.B. English Department was somewhat under
attack for its preoccupation with Jane Austen and modern
authors, but several individual professors were defended.
Dickens was praised and Glenn Sadler remarked that the
characterization in George Eliot's Middlemarch was superb.
He then told us of a Victorian authoress by the name of
Maria Karelle (2) who published more works than any
other author of her day. She won fame and popularity
by spinning a story about her marriage to William
Shakespeare in a former life.

It was remarked that there are several people who
claim to be writing through a spiritual connection with
deceased authors. One woman claims to talk to Oscar
Wilde, for instance. "That's pretty wild!" said Mrs.
Guthrie. Several members then described Gormenghast
for those of us who have been thinking of reading it.

Turning finally to Voyage to Arcturus, Mrs. Guthrie
exposed the book as "terrible." She was critical of
the obvious strict Calvinistic hangup of the author, (A)
of the weird names of characters and the strange details,
e.g., the tentacles coming from the tummies of some
creatures.

Why did we read it? Something to do with a lighthouse?
The best piece of architecture we ever read?

"It's a wonder that the publishers accepted it."

Glenn mentioned that Lindsey doesn't keep track of
the details he creates. He is not consistent within his
secondary world. Mrs. Guthrie felt that everyone in the
book was "too pure." Somehow this led to a digression on
sensitivity sessions, which no one seemed to feel were of
much value, and we proceeded to homemade donuts and
Mexican style hot chocolate.

(1. Maybe not in Santa Barbara, but I have VOYAGE and
have never been able to find THE ELEVENTH SEEKER for
sale or in a library. If I had I'd have snapped it
up - 'tis a good book. 2. I think you're talking
about Marie Corelli, but not being positive I'll add
the note rather than making a correction.---DGM)

((A. This sounds pretty hasty to me. In what way
Calvinistic? Because Taskull is spiritually weak and
chameleonic? I'd love to see chapter-and-verse quotes
from the Institutes to support such a statement.---GFE))

APOLOGY: We had the Santa Rosa branch report for May,
1971, but somehow it got misplaced since then. We are
really sorry.---LAR

B. R. R. (Bothlorien), reported by Doris Robin and Karen
cribble, Oct 9, topic Animals in The Lord of the Rings.

This is not by our usual secretary. It is written by
Bothlorien's hardworking, loyal, self-sacrificing, humble
moderator, and the trustworthy, faithful and diligent
Captain of the Dorninorean Archers, seeing as the lazy,
We'er-do-well, renegade, secretary didn't show. So bleah!
to you, Imperor!

This meeting was the smallest ever experienced by
the glorious branch of Bothlorien. However, nine hardy
souls essayed forth to brave the topic, "Animals in
The Lord of the Rings."

First it was observed that there appear to be two
types of animals in Tolkien's work: speaking ones,
such as the Balin and Smaug, and the non-speaking ones,
such as the oliphaunts, rabbits, and Rohirrin horses.
However, another division can be made; there are animals
that are clearly intelligent, yet they do not speak,
such as Shadowfax or Bill the Pony. And, finally, another
division can be made between good intelligent and non-
intelligent animals, and the bad intelligent and non-
intelligent animals. But Tolkien can't be categorized.
There is the fox that observes the journey of the hobbits
through the Shire; he thinks, but there is no way to tell
if he can speak. Maybe all the animals in Middle Earth
are intelligent, even the conies that Smeagol kills for
Sam, and Tolkien just doesn't bother to describe their
thoughts.

It was then noted that even the speaking animals
seem more human than, say, Arnia's talking beasts.
Perhaps that is because the Arnia animals, like the
animals in The Wind in the Willows, are humanized.
They have teas, and wear galoshes, and carry knapsacks.
But the Tolkien animals, even the intelligent ones,
remain animals. They stand in a different relationship
to human beings than do the talking beasts. (1)

We mentioned briefly that the Balin in The Hobbit
were rather a "deus ex machina" device, but in LOTR their
rescue of Frodo and Sam from the slopes of Mt. Doom
is acceptable because the reader now knows about them.

We ruminated a while on whether the Balrog could
be considered an animal. After we decided we didn't
know, we swallowed our cud and continued.

We saw a parallel between Shadowfax and Fatty Lumpkin.
Both the majestic Shadowfax and the lowly Fatty Lumpkin
chose their masters and allowed the selves to be ridden.
The Nazguls' horses were captured Rohirrin horses that
were bred to accept the Wraiths.

There was a digression on the qualities of cats.

It was pointed out that only black horses were
stolen. Was that because Sauron wanted only black
animals, or because the black horses already had a
seed of evil and were more easily bent to badness?
What! Is Tolkien a racist? (2) Equine equality!

But Tolkien uses deep archetypal concepts. Black may have taken on bad connotations as far back as primitive man's fear of nightfall.

There was another digression on the gold toe coverings found in King Tutankhamen's tomb.

The idea of intelligent animals may have its source in the human need for companionship. It was brought up that in Maurice Maeterlinck's play, The Bluebird, the servile, sycophantic Dog is good, while the free and independent cat is the villain. (A)

Shelob was an animal, so we talked about her next. She was the most evil animal in the book. We observed that insects are often depicted as evil. There was a digression on the 1934-type ant society in The Once and Future King, by T. H. White. The ants experienced a continual barrage of propaganda and ghastly songs. When they went to war, the songs played were aggressively patriotic and militaristic. We wonder, did they play their national ant-hem? (Ooooog.)

We also wondered how Shelob's children got from her lair all the way to Mirkwood without being squelched. Somebody envisioned the Trek of the Baby Spiders. Somebody else began singing "The Bridge over the River Anduin"... (1. That isn't really universally true of the Tarnian animals - indeed, it really is largely only true in the first two books, as I recall. In WARDROBE it's almost completely true; in CASPIAN some of the animals still are humanized; by the time we get to DAM TREADER Reepicheep is the only really humanized animal, with his rapier and such. Bree in HORSE AND HIS BOY, on the other hand, is strictly a horse except that he is intelligent and talks - he doesn't wear clothes or act otherwise in an un-horsely manner. Animals aren't important in SILVER CHAIR and MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW (they come in at the end of the latter, and are quite animal-like), and in LAST BATTLE again it is only in their intelligence and speech that they are humanized. /Maybe Lewis read LOTR and decided to make his animals more like Tolkien's - the transition comes at about the right time.../ /I'm not serious.../ 2. Of course. He's British, ain't he? Worse yet, he was born in South Africa...---DGH)

((A. I think the idea had its source in telepathic exchanges between people and animals. /Check a new book called Animal Ghosts by R. Bayless./ I know my kitties can think, even though they don't talk. They think such things as "You love him more than me, don't you. Well, I'll just go off and sulk," or "If you try to keep me in-so I can't fight that black bastard, you just see what I'm gonna do to your wall!" /I'm sure they have good thoughts too, but I just can't document them quite so clearly./---GFE))

SA. GABRIEL (Lothlorien), reported by Bruce McEnany
met June 25 to discuss Descent into Hell by Charles Williams

For a variety of reasons I probably will not go into, this was perhaps the strangest meeting of the San Gabriel branch held since Arond (the real one) passed into the west. Nevertheless, as a meeting it was quite good, with a rather lively discussion being carried on among those who did read the book. Our Glorious and Mostly Fearless Leader, the High King Glen wended his way from the Westlands in order to moderate in place of our Fair and Noble, if Less Fearless Lady Protectress, who is intimidated by Williams.

Perhaps the most easily understood idea to smite the reader of Descent into Hell upon the furrowed brow is the fact that this is not a book to be easily understood. This was a principal point in the discussion, and was returned to throughout the meeting by bewildered souls like myself. Nevertheless, our Moderator led us bravely into the darkness in search of interesting things.

He started the discussion by asking for opinions as to what the single main, absolutely central idea was in the book. There were several, but ultimately most agreed that the idea of the bearing of burdens for one another was the theme. (Most of the rest of the discussion of this point came much later, but I will reveal it now, reserving, as I always do, the privilege of adjusting the time sequences of the meeting in the interest of unity.) Many people thought that Williams' idea was an ignoble one; rallied by Talbot Brady, they held that to give one's pain voluntarily to a loved one is absolutely not an act of love, but one of selfishness. The defense of Williams' point, though not as unified either in concept or presentation seemed to win out in the end (in my eyes, and I count myself neutral and objective, and I really never do take sides, since I am generally too busy taking notes.) It was based on the ideas that love is not simply a sharing of pleasure, but a sharing of all existence, of which pain is undeniably a part; that this was a religious and/or emotional one, not to be explained intellectually; mention was made of diverse things from the carrying of the Cross for Christ and the bearing of the Ring for Frodo. The experiences of C.S. Lewis with the idea were most interesting; aside from his application of it to Orual in Pill We Have Faces, according to Glen, he used it in his own life: Lewis' wife of only a very few years was dying of cancer and was in great pain. Lewis offered to take the pain upon himself for a time, and claimed to have felt the actual pain of the disease while his wife got relief. Scoffers compared this to sympathetic birth pains. But they are to be forgiven.

The entire symbolism of the doppelganger problem was discussed at length at the meeting as well, and included the following observations: Doppelgangers are traditionally a premonition of death. Is this ignored or is Williams directing the imagery to a spiritual death and rebirth?

Were the doppelgangers representations of the unconscious or subconscious? Adela's image seemed to be the evil part of her person, whereas Pauline's seemed to be the opposite, a kind of conscience coming forth when she felt guilty or wrong. It was even observed that since Pauline's mother was so disturbed by the mention of the doppelganger, perhaps that meant that she had seen one too.

The symbolism and ideas concerning the doppelganger was extended through Adela to the false Adela and Wentworth. Does anyone know where Wentworth's worth went? According to Glen and Jung, it disappeared into his anima. Jung holds that each person has male (animus) and female (anima) psychological characteristics. Too long suppressed, Wentworth's own anima took on the form of another individual. It was devoid of personal characteristics; these were a part of Wentworth. Was the Adela-succubus-doppelganger an extension of Wentworth or an extension of Adela? Or was it the extension of Adela as perceived by Wentworth? Or...perhaps was it Lily Sammie herself, who was after all the Lilith tempter figure in the story (Lily=Lilith). Ginny Lanzer pointed out that while Wentworth wasn't consciously "telling himself tales", making the woman into whatever he wanted, she changed once, into an old and withered figure. Was this aged in that it was an old truth, the exposition of a falsehood, or was it indeed Lily Sammie?

The superuniversal theme of Pride worked its way into the discussion as well, at two points. The first (actually the second, but remember, time is meaningless) was during the discussion of the bearing of burdens. Some modest genius of a notetaker being perhaps a little less neutral than usual suggested that perhaps keeping all one's pain for one's self was an exposition of the slightest bit of pride, hubris, or what you will. To which the notable reply was voiced by Talbot Brady, "What's wrong with pride?" To all Teachers I suggest that Pride is an example of a spiritual "Black Hole". It draws all things into it and reduces them to nothingness. Recall C.S. Lewis' Hell in the Great Divorce--seemingly huge from the inside, but a mere speck from without. And Pride has no hair. To all others I would recommend the Bible, LoTR, Greek Tragedy, even Norse Myth, for explanations of pride.

The second (or first, if you are still hung up on the idea of time) example of Pride is rooted in the transition of the Hanged Man (Tarot?) into salvation. Starting initially with self-loathing, he was able to overcome and reach salvation, perhaps because he would never look outside himself for it. (---? **Typist: If that last sentence doesn't make any sense, guess why. A whole line got left out. Once again from the top) Starting initially with self-loathing, he was able to overcome and reach salvation. Wentworth, having pride, could never find salvation, perhaps because he would never look outside himself for it.

I would close my report of this meeting, already too long, with first a piece of information which I pass on without comment: The name Peter Stanhope was an early pseudonym under which Charles Williams himself wrote plays; second with the observation of Glen GoodKnight, that the discussion of books is in a sense futile, in that we cannot really put our raw impressions into communicable form, and are thus incapable of an interchange of ideas on the level in which they occur to us. To which I would personally respond (I'm editorializing too much, but...) with some agreement but with the (I hope) encouraging observation that that is one of the greatest things about the Mythopoeic Society, that it is a group which functions so closely so much that people actually do, it seems, acquire a kind of sensitivity to one another's thoughts, feelings, and ideas above and beyond words; such situations, as far as I have been able to ascertain, do not very commonly exist except in families and close friendships. To the Society it lends an air of understanding on something more than the pure scholarly level, and is something that I, at least, appreciate very much.

Although there is no connection with the Society, I would like to encourage the secretaries of branches to send branch reports to EE. They will be printed, although I reserve the right to edit them as I see fit to cut items which I feel will not be of interest to the readers, and to comment at the end of the report on such matters as I choose. At present it is my understanding that after November MYTHPRINT will no longer be publishing branch reports at all, and even if this is incorrect very few reports are included in MYTHPRINT at best. Any branch secretary who sends a report to EE will get the issue in which it appears free, for whatever that may be worth in the way of encouragement. And you get to see Your Name In Print. These reports will be unofficial, of course, since there is no connection between EE and the Society - but no one can prevent anyone from sending material to a fanzine for publication, and I am notifying branch secretaries (or anyone else) that a form of written contribution which EE will accept most happily is the branch report...

EE will be published monthly, probably about the second Saturday of the month. It will be mailed first class to subscribers and contributors. MYTHING LINK subscriptions will be honored on an issue-for-issue basis with EE unless the subscriber wishes to have a cash refund, in which case this will be provided on a prorated basis. Subscription prices of EARLY ENGLISH will be 4/\$1, maximum subscription one year. Single copies will be available for 25¢ for those who want a sample, but only one single to a customer - after that you subscribe, contribute, or get off the mailing list. The mailing list will be in charge of Lyne Motis, 3922 Big Oak Dr., Studio City, CA91604; send subs to her. Letters to me at the PO Box; after an issue is printed Lyne will go through it and add the extra issue for each contributor, won't you, Tad baby?

Depending on how much room is taken up by other things I may be outrageous periodically in my editorial; there are a lot of sacred cows that I've been building up to take potshots at. My policy is that I don't misstate my honest opinions, but I tend to seem more negative than I really am because "if dog bites man that's nothing, but if man bites dog, that's news!" Why should I say something people would just agree with? First issue of EE out around Dec.

Mythquotes

TOM NELSON (Triad of the West) Dave, I tend to agree with you where it comes to classing DERYNI RISING as a historical novel setting rather than a myth setting. The two are close and at the same time worlds apart. The magic in Deryni Rising was that of mortal rather than that of immortal. It was what would come out of Alexander the Great as opposed to what would come from Zeus.

I liked Charissa very much and was pulling for her and Morgan the whole book. It would have been a good political marriage and if Charissa could be taught to stop hating Morgan because of her father's death they would probably have had a good marriage. Each of them was independent but at the same time needed each other's strength.

Jehana was a good character but I disliked her in the way many people disliked Charissa. Many people in the society, I understand, are pulling for a Morgan-Jehana union. This will probably come to pass but I don't feel it would have been as strong as Charissa-Morgan.

I would put the book more in the place where The Hobbit is to the Lord of the Rings rather than where The Fellowship of the Ring is in depth. There is a lot in both books and either can stand without the rest of the series.

((I think the analogy is a good one. Some people claim that DERYNI RISING can't be criticized for, say, one-sidedness in characterization because the other two volumes haven't appeared yet. But each volume in a trilogy is a unit and must be readable by itself. By contrast, LoTR is not a trilogy but a single novel in six books.--GFE))

PAULA BAROR (Orange County): Dear Everyone:
Tagging up at third--parsnips and pfiffltriggi, fosterites and puffballs, what is all this madness?! The taking of the Professor's name in vain, oh, alas, what have we fallen to? (Or, what have we fallen from...)

Firstoff, I always got the opinion that Beorn was dead before the War of the Ring. "Frodo learned that Grimbeorn the Old, son of Beorn, was now the lord of many sturdy men" and Glain says, "...and like Beorn of old, they are not overfond of dwarves." (I 241, RM).

And as for Treebeard, well now, I'm not at all sure how many people knew he was still there. Aragorn didn't; presumably then Elrond didn't, or Aragorn would have known. He thought they might even be just a legend of Rohan! Legolas knew of their existence, but thought that they dwelt no longer in Middle-Earth. Celeborn and Galadriel knew Treebeard, so they probably knew where he was, too. But I doubt if he would have left Fangorn; for that matter, I doubt how much good it would have done. Ents will burn, and the idea of one sneaking into Mordor is, um, rather hasty: I'm sure a Tree of any sort would have been spotted in the plains, and the Nazgul could easily get rid of one. And if the Gwyd and the huorns all left Fangorn, the forest would have been at the mercy of Saruman and his orcs.

As for Bombadil, I thought Gandalf explained all that? He would have been as "un-right" for the job as Vir'Vachal for doing in the Nameless One. They operate on different planes; Tom's concern is not with the world of men. I think this is the crux of the matter. I brought the subject up at our last branch meeting, and the general thought seemed to be that Men and Elves were responsible for the making of the Ring, Dwarves and a Wizard and a Hobbit for finding it, and that therefore, it was for Mortals (say Elves are mortal, for the sake of argument...) to repair the damage; it was no concern of the Eagles or the Ents or Bombadil. Or rather, it was of concern to them, but it was not their place to do anything about it. And anyway, Gwaihir couldn't be entrusted with the ring, he was much too flighty. (1)

I'm not sure exactly what galen means by "consistency in the hierarchy of races." But that's never stopped me. If the intention was all Elves should be Good, Hobbits somewhat less so, Men in the middle, Dwarves a bit below that but still Good Guys when it wasn't a question of a long-term loan, well... Tolkien's races are none wholly Good: Morgoth was a Vala, for heaven's sake, but the greed engendered in him by the Silmarilli led to the whole mess in the first place! Feanor may have been one of the greatest of the Eldor, but he rebelled against the Valar and led a good portion of his people into exile in a vain attempt to recapture the Jewels, leading to a war in which the Goodies were utterly defeated. If Luthien and Beren hadn't recovered one of the Jewels, which Earendil used as a token of admittance into the West where he obtained help for Middle-earth, Feanor's folly would have been the end of Middle-earth right then and there. The Ents in the dark heart of Fangorn had turned to Evil; Wizards certainly weren't uncorruptable, nor Men (the Witch-king, Ar-Pharazon, Boromir). If all Hobbits were kind-hearted, innocent, and uncorruptable, that would be inconsistent! (2)

On Deryni Rising: I'll take bets on this: Jehana is going to turn out to be a very sympathetic character. I think one of the strongest points in favor of the book is the depth to which the author has gone in building the society of the book. (My coherence seems to be lacking something tonight. Oh, well.) I usually find myself more interested in the background histories and social structures of a fantasy world than the action of the plot anyway, though. I'd really like to see the third volume contain piles of appendices with a detailed history of the Deryni Interregnum et al. Overall, DR reminds me somehow of Anne McCaffrey's dragon books, to which I am also slightly addicted. I'm not sure where exactly the similarity lies--unless it's the way in which the men are characterized. I sense a similarity, especially, between Brion and F'lar, but Brion isn't there long enough for one to get more than a snatch of the whole man before he's gone (and, yes, that death scene. Argh.)

A clarification: what I meant up there (now I see it all down in dying-ribbon-grey and white it doesn't say what I meant) wasn't so much that the amount of world-building was amazing--it doesn't compare with LotR, nor Red Moon etc.--but that in a pseudo-historical novel, rather than another time-another world, it is rather unusual. (I'm mixing tenses again. *Sigh.*) More or less highly civilized cultures--such as that of DR--are nowhere near as plentiful as the primitive religion-agriculture-buckle-your-swash-and-bash-in-that-foul-mouthed-camel-monger's-head type of fantasy world. I make sense now, yes? (Not really.)

I, too, would like to hear Gracia hold forth at length; I have "believed" in "free-floating psychic energies" and such ever since I was knee-high to a stunted dwarf, although I prefer to call them ghosties and angels and Tuatha De Danaan and Arthur's huntsmen and gods--it's so much more fun that way! One of these days I'll tell you about our poltergeist, George; alas, my brother and I wax old, and George doth not come around as he was wont to do of yore. You know, we should have a Mythopoeic Conference on Psychic Phenomena and share all the strange and glorious stories we know. In a candlelit room high in the hills at the next hour of the demon. (In Dave's apartment during a blackout the next time we get a storm like the one that plagued good King Clode.) (They do say the ghost of Old Lady Irvine walks the hills of Silverado canyon; I know those who know those who know those who have seen her. Seances up there when October blows tend to have VERY strange results. Or so I'm told.) ((Aa))

While I'm at it: I think Dave's old Irish is the same as the English Galen has for the Dagda; I know for sure Daur is Oak. But does anyone with a nice old Celtic mythology book know the significance of the oak's two

cries and the four-fold music? (That one does sound familiar, though. Looks like I'm headed back to the bookshelves. Oh.....)

(1. Men and Elves were responsible for the making of the Ring? How did men get into it? Or are you maintaining (as I have seen done) that Sauron began life as a man? I don't believe that a-tall. I'm almost entirely convinced that Sauron was of the same race as the Istari, and probably higher in their hierarchy than any of the Five. There is too distinct an ordering of races in Tolkien; men are simply inferior to Elves, and it is inconceivable to me that a man could deceive a whole group of Elves the way Sauron deceived the Elven-smiths of Eregion. Also, that something that a man could make would have the power of enslaving an Elf or an Istar(us? Or what's the singular of Istari?). I still think that at the very least, if Gwaihir could bring Frodo and Sam from Mt. Doom, he could have brought them to it as well. He had to go there anyway, didn't he? Why not carry a passenger? Of course, then Gollum would have had a hard time following, so the ending would have had to be different...and if Frodo had had trouble getting rid of the Ring what then? So he had to go overland because that was the only way Gollum could follow him, and only Gollum could cause the Ring to be destroyed. Because he had held it longer than anyone except Sauron, and only with his aid could it be finally eliminated. (Well, it's a theory...)

2. I think Galen referred to each race having its distinctive character, as opposed to other races, rather than to levels of ethical quality. While all the races seem more or less human, in that I am unable to detect any distinctly inhuman qualities in any of them (including what I know about the Valar and Istari), various of them have particular human qualities in much greater - or lesser - degree than others. Ents, for instance, have superhuman patience. Elves are not so much Good as lacking in certain human failings largely attributable to the shortness of human life. ((A)) Dwarves are rather more attached to material things than the average man, but otherwise are pretty much human in character. Hobbits are not immune to the longing for material things, as Galen said, but they don't in general, seem to have any drive for power over others. Which is the principal gift of the Ring, and is why therefore the hobbits are most fit for ring-bearers.--DGH)

((Aa. I promise to hold forth next time--delightful of both of you to ask. By all means, let's have a mythopoeic Confo on Psychic Phenomena. Why don't you call one, Paula? I don't have any experiences of my own to recount, but I know lots that other people have had. A. Response to your response: Care to develop this further? I tend to think that Elves are very specially Good, partly from choice and partly because they have deeper spiritual resources and thus are much less finite than men on all levels. True, they can suffer pain, or be killed, and they gradually lose their power over the millennia; but they aren't as subject to psychological needs--loneliness, sexual frustration, etc. /Judging from Elrond and Celebrian's long separation, Arwen's 2700 unattached years, etc./--GEE))

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