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The Shire Post

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The Shire Post

MRS. VERA CHAPMAN | 21 Harrington House | Stanhope St. | London N.W.1, England

I am gravely disturbed by the appearance in London of a magazine calling itself Gandalf’s Garden, which is devoted to the protest of youth, etc., but is permeated with drug-taking and the psychedelic cult. It advertises Lord of the Rings as the psyche-delectable masterpiece — and uses much of the terminology of ‘the books’ in a context of ‘taking trips’ etc. The very last thing the authors would ever have in mind or approve of. I wonder if you, or he, have encountered this? I feel this misuse of the name and the book should be stopped. I feel very strongly that these books are most emphatically wholesome and sane, and that it would be a tragedy to let them be smeared in any way with the psychedelic cult and the prevailing obsession with mental disorder and that thing which seems to me rather worse than the death-wish, the deliberate wish to be insane. Let us keep the Shire clean from all such!

MARTHA MUNCH | 261 South Battavia | Orange Calif 92668

Tolkien does get to you! Last Saturday I was in L. A. and happened to look up toward the Hollywood Hills. It was unmissable; there on a mountain throne was Minas Tirth! The edifice was actually Griffith Park Observatory, but the architecture was close enough to pass for something Middle-earthish.

CHRIS JONES | Ny Ny 10027

Thanks for publishing my synopsis— it looks fine except that the last paragraph got slightly garbled somewhere along the line. The 68 Yule Moot was great, especially Sister Pauline’s paper. Incidentally, Gimli’s devotion to Galadriel was not courtly love! Courtly love was simply a form of glorified adultery, like Lancelot and Guinevere.

Will you publish information about how and when we can get the Harvard Lampoons parody?

IAN COLLINS | Stanhope House | Stanhope Place London

A copy of The Green Dragon No. 5 dated December 1968 reached me recently and I was interested to read your advice to non-US Tolkien addicts on how best to obtain the Caedmon recording of Poems and Songs of Middle-earth. I think I should point out that, we at Caedmon’s licensees in this country, have published this record. We have publicised it and it is selling very well but no doubt there are still some Tolkien enthusiasts who aren’t aware of its existence, and a note in one of your Tolkien-orientated publications would bring it to their attention, and serve both our causes. The catalogue number is TC1231 and the price in the UK 43s. 9d. It is available only through record dealers, not direct from us.

ROGER BLACK | 617 Homm Street | Bethalto Illinois 62010

The 1969 World Book Encyclopedia Year Book’s Dictionary supplement has the following two entries:

HIPPIE: any group of beatniks who practice communal living, believe in absolute freedom of expression, and profess a philosophy of love and fellowship: J. R. R. Tolkien’s classic trilogy, The Lord of the Rings, is absolutely the favorite book of every hippie (Ramparts).


NAN SCOTT | 2712 Century Dr | Lawrence Ks 66044

Thanks for the latest Green Dragon. But you make a statement which I must strongly disagree, preferably where it will reach the eyes of either TI or Niels readers. Of Swan’s musical settings you categorically state, ‘The music, for the most part, does not capture the feeling of Middle-earth’. Perhaps you felt that the implication that this was merely your opinion was present, but I suspect some younger members will accept this statement as authoritative fact and cheat themselves of a charming experience.

There’s no accounting for taste” and “de gustibus” but I like most of the songs very much; and as someone who has read Tolkien’s books many, many times had studied music from the age of five, I feel my taste and opinions are as well-rounded in experience as yours, or Marion Zimmer Bradley’s. And thus, I feel that your insistant Not should indeed be qualified. For some of us frequent travellers in Middle-earth, the melancholy charm of Swan’s music is deeply appropriate to Tolkien’s verses, at least in the title song, Treebeard’s song, and ‘Upon the hearth the fire is red’. (I would call Bolbo’s “I sit beside the fire” banal and disappointing, to my taste.) I would qualify my approval though by adding that the song book and a piano are a prompter route to Middle-earth than Mr. Elvin’s singing of Swan’s melodies on record. There’s nothing really wrong with his performances; it’s just that it’s closer to the concert hall than the woods of Lorien or the wilds of Eriador. But for a number of songs themselves are evocative and moving. If I recall correctly, Professor Tolkien himself was full of enthusiasm about them when we talked with him in June of 1966. On the other hand, Marion Bradley’s Irish folk-songs modelled settings at the conference left me cold, though I know a lot of people liked them again, de gustibus.

ANTHONY CERMAK | 14585 Aloha Ave | Saratoga Calif 95070

In the last Tolkien Journal you mentioned the book The Last Unicorn I have read this book and it is interesting but a better one still is Three Hearts And Three Lions by Paul Anderson. This book tells of a different time stream than our own. King Arthur has lived and died and the road to Taery is just over the horizon.

It was published by Doubleday and there was a popular version too [Paul has also written Broken Sword, an exciting fantasy adventure, but long out of print -EM].
Not too long ago I received my order for the back issues of the Journal and, after perusing them, I would like to make some comments on one of the articles, Jan Woezik’s “Samwise—Halfwise?” in Vol. III, no. 2.

The major item which tends to oversimplify Sam’s importance, in my opinion, is the change in viewpoint between Book IV and Book VI of the Trilogy. Thru all of the Books to number IV, when in the company of Frodo, Tolkien allows us to read his thoughts and emotions, until that is, the last chapter of IV, "The Choices of Master Samwise," where, for obvious reasons, Frodo has no conscious thoughts, only “darkness and foul dreams.” But throughout Book VI, we observe only Frodo’s outward actions and expressed thoughts. The reason for this is because, as the Hobbits penetrated deeper into Mordor, the Ring gained greater and greater possession of Frodo. I begin to see it in my mind all the time, like a great wheel of fire, and x later, I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades, until finally, “I have come...” But I do not choose now to do what I came to do... The Ring is mine!” To put it simply, to narrate a single obsession thru 50 pages make for a bored reader, particularly with so much outside action occurring. After the destruction of the Ring, Tolkien does not return to his previous viewpoint for two reasons: consistency and, because Frodo has been wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden, his thoughts would be completely, or nearly so, beyond our ken. If an arsonist burn his house down, it is a rare person indeed who will not demand retribution.

As for Samwise the Gardener, he tends growing things in the Earth, and, by extension, may be regarded as the Earth—Middle-earth—personified, and his desire to be free from Saulron’s Evil, The change in gender (we are accustomed to regard Earth as female—The Great Earthmother) may be derived from North European legend. Note the changes in traditional gender in Frodo’s song about the Merry Old Inn when first in Bree. For name derivations I once ran into Gimli in an unabridged dictionary and found therein a meaning appropriate to the traditional passing of the dwarf from this world: Gimli—the Nordic term for Heaven.

If I didn’t say so in my other letter, I think the latest TJ is the finest issue to come out so far—the contents were excellent without the intensity of some of the articles that appeared before (Mrs. Howe’s galactical thing was well done but somewhat purposeless). The most fault I note is that it did not have as many pictures as some previous ones did. I hope that you can convince Tim Kirk to do more cover designs—his ones for III, 2 are some of the finest things TJ has published, despite the snide comments of Mr. Musselman in the latest "Shire-Post.”

I’m glad that you’re interested in seeing a copy of the Oz Club magazine, "The Baum Bugle.” I really have much too unorganized a mind to ask my brother in Chicago, who handles the mailing, to mail you a sample of the autumn issue, which will be out in about a week, and you really need to see more than one issue to get an idea of the publication. So today I write Fred M. Meyer, the Club secretary. I’ll send him a check for $2.50 to cover a year’s membership and subscription, as a gift from me. [It is an interesting magazine. Fred M. Meyer’s address is: 620 First Ave So, Escanaba, MI 49829, ERM]

I respect D. Usellman’s opinion stated in his letter to the Shire Post (Vol. III no. 3) on illustration of characters and situations from LotR etc, but I am afraid I must disagree w. (uiss?) Usellman states “Tolkien was never overmeticulous in describing dress and architecture” and that is true to an extent: the Professor doesn’t need to be meticulous in order to make his reader see his scenes and events. Of course, each reader will see somewhat differently, and that’s what makes the illustrations done by TSA (etc.) members so interesting... It’s surprising just how similar and yet how different artists’ conceptions are to the pictures we see in our own minds when we read LotR.

I was pleased recently to see my own illustration of Galadriel adorning the recent Tolkien Conference circular... pleased and surprised, for I was able to see just how much my own conception of the Lady has changed in the last few months. If I were to draw her now, I’m afraid she would be less like, as Sam said, a ‘lass in spring’ (or something closely akin) and more of an old lady, good-natured and to be trusted. Anyhow, at the time of the drawing, that’s the way Tolkien’s magic worked on me. That’s the beauty of it all—it works on everyone differently. I don’t see Elrond’s House the way Tim Kirk seems to see it, but then he probably doesn’t see Galadriel the way I do. Besides, some of the loveliest drawings I’ve ever seen illustrate The Hobbit—and were drawn by J.R.R. Tolkien himself!

JUDY MOSINGER | 14 Sackston Woods St. | Louis Mo 63141

In “The Adventures of Tom Bombadil” J.R.R. Tolkien has written a comment on every poem except one. This one is among the most interesting. It is "The Mewlips." Any comment I’ve read or written on anything, and to do any more, is sheer stupidity on the part of this reader. No illusion to anything in the books—B Foster

On an enlarged map of the Middle-earth made by Ballantine Books there is something strange. On the Western side of the Ered Luin Mountains, in Forlindon there are the Angerthanian letters Kf and on the East of the Ered Luin Mountains in Harlindon are the letters: Y. What do they mean? [Sheer stupidity on part of the Editor. Norman L. Foster, ERM]

I have some sympathy with the sour response of certain readers to the proliferation of Tolkien related material. In fact, when I first looked at a Tolkien Society publication, I had a swift vision of thousands of people feeding off the imagination of one man.

Happily, I went on to look, read and enjoy. For all this elaboration, compilation, derivation, computation and illustration is glorious play. Even though it may be more fun to do the elaborating, compiling etc. oneself than to see what others have done, there is the pleasure of sharing, and, now and then, something that adds to the joy of reading Tolkien.

Play or not, I hope that writers and illustrators will voluntarily accept a couple of rules:
1. In illustration, stay as close as possible to the description in the book.
2. In writing, please be sure you are in accord with the book, even if you have to re-read it several times.

ANNIE LITTLE ETKIN | 6819 2nd St. | Riverdale Md.

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TOM EATON | 154 Upper Byrdcliffe | Woodstock NY 12498.

Received the Tolkien Journal (vol. III, no. 3) today, and noted the question you posed about Bree, in the editorial.

I believe the name Bree occurred in Hal Clement’s great novel, Mission of Gravity, in the early ’50’s, as the name of the ship ‘factualy a string of low rafts’ of some explorer-traders of the planet Meskin. The Mesklites were (as I recall) small, worm-like beings, natives of a monstrously heavy world whose physical description Clement went into in some detail. I do not recall the name of their captain (of the ‘Bree’) who was the real hero of the novel, but do remember the pains the author went to to establish the logical possibility of such a planet’s existence, and his detailed description of its physical and environmental on Meskin. In this way Clement reminds me somewhat of Tolkien (and to some degree, Heinlein) in the manner by which he constructs a plausible setting for the characters to move around in.

You might forgive Clement was such as myself a service by passing on any information, in the next TJ, as to where Cemant has disappeared to. After his rather disappointing follow-up to Mission, Cycle of Fire, he seemed to drop out of sight. [I see him at almost every meeting of the New England SF Association that I attend, and he has had many stories in Galaxy and II. He has just completed a sequel to Mission of Gravity. ERM]

I enjoy reading the TJ, and have only one beef: the artwork. Generally it is terrible, including the last issue. The alternate bookcovers for LotR paperbacks were to be blunt, awful. It does a craftsman like Tolkien a shameful disservice to repre
sent his work with such hasty, ill-conceived artwork. I do not
mean to hurt anyone's feelings, because I'm sure the artists do
the best they can, but I believe it would be better to publish a
smart-looking Journal with no art at all, than to continue in
the present vain.

Otherwise (to avoid ending on a completely negative note) the
Journal is rewarding reading. Keep it up!

JOHN STEPHEN MADDUX | Box 263 | University of Dallas |
Dallas Texas 75065.

If #8 was the best I have read. Mrs. Howes' work of dating
is of invaluable worth. The earlier attempt recorded in your
Journals were plainly wrong, both on extrinsic evidence (a char-
acter in Lewis's That Hideous Strength places the fall of Numen-
or before the ice ages) and on internal.

DAVID DAMROSCH | 119 East 74th St. | New York, NY
0021

I saw a letter, in The Tolkien Journal (Astron, 1966), concerning
the relative ages of Tom Bombadil and Fangorn (Treebeard to
ome). The answer is this: Celeborn--Gandalf--are wrong;
Tom Bombadil is eldest. My reference is Ballantine Books
paperback edition. On p. 89 The Two Towers, Treebeard says:
"but there are hollow dales in this land where the darkness has
never been lifted, and the trees are older than I am." This proves
Gandalf wrong (p. 208: For Treebeard is Fangorn, . . . and when
you speak with him you will hear the speech of the Oldest of all
living things), and Celeborn is also incorrect.

As for Tom, he 'remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn',
'fellowship of the Ring, p. 102: just above that: 'Mark my words,
my friends: Tom was here before the river and the trees.'
Tom was here before the trees; Fangorn not until somewhat later:
Old Tom Bombadil is Eldest.
Tom was also here before the seas were bent (vol. I, p. 182).

IAN C SCOTT | 2712 Century Dr | Lawrence Kansas 66044.

will follow your suggestion about reading Lloyd Alexander as
soon as I can get hold of the books in proper sequence from the
library. Meanwhile, I'm looking into George MacDonald. So
as I rather like The Princess and the Goblin, but at the Back of
the North Wind nearly drove me up the wall. Little Diamond is
surely the most irritating literary creature I've ever encountered
since that recurring Reepi-Cheep in Narnia books. Better than
MacDonald I like E. Nesbit's books, which I discovered just last
winter, and The Wind in the Willows, which in some scenes has
a cozy flavour of the Shire and hobbit life about it.

That brings me to my main question on comment. Are any of
your other readers interested in Tolkien's world of nature and
sciences? Most of the people who write to Niekas and TJ seem
to focus either on topics of language and linguistics or are most
interested in SF and/or fantasy. For me the biggest attraction
in re-reading the books (the narrative excitement was paramount
in my first reading) is Professor Tolkien's treatment of the
physical world and the relationship he establishes between his
characters and nature. Certainly the beautiful and powerful
language of the books helps to establish this, but apart from lan-
grage-for-its-own-sake (names, etc.) Professor Tolkien seems to
have observed and understood nature in a way quite uncommon to-
day. There are no 'pretty' description passages for there own sake,
other, his characters live closer to nature than we do, and trees,
birds, mountains, and weather are a more palpable and important
part of their existence.

I suppose all of us have wanted to enter into Tolkien's world more
fully, have wished we could be transported from the 20th century
into the 3rd age of Middle-earth. In what small way I could, I
did enter that world. Besides beginning to notice trees and
plants for the first time in my life, and besides emulating Sam
and adding a bit of green to the world by making my first gardens,
and having a friendship with two friends-be gan to go 'hobbiting'.
I know that Peter Beagle has gone in for this sort of thing. Has anyone
done it?

Picture if you can bear to, three faculty wives between the ages
of 25 and 30 setting off on the road with back packs and bed rolls,
sacks and mushrooms, walking through shadows to the edge of
light and making camp under the elvish stars. Our longest trek
was 24 miles (on the occasion there were only two of us and we
were not scared in the woods-two damnfool little girls- and came back
the same night). On another occasion friends with a farm pro-
vided a bountiful hobbit breakfast after we'd slept in their or-
chard in 34-degree weather. On our most recent trip we were
surrounded at night-fall by fireflies and whip-poor-wills in a
most elvish moonlit glade in an oak woods. Two of us-Judy Quinn
and I-have even taken horseback lessons. It's easy to pretend
that the beasts are hobbit ponies, and it certainly increases one's
respect for the endurance of the nine to ride long distances! Per-
haps if Nellie, Judy, and I were to set out now, we just might make
it to Bellnap by mid-October. (Probably the only way we could
afford to come. . .)

My thanks to everyone who offered suggestions on the breeding
habits of orcs. [In Niekas-ERM]

ROBERT KARP | 1875 SW 35th Place | Gainesville Florida

In the tale of the years it says Samwise Gamgee, after Rose died,
got Westmarch and then over the sea. Yet in the tale of
Aragorn and Arwen, Arwen says she could not go over the sea if
she wanted because no one would be left to take her, how then did
Sam go?

DAIND BISENIEKS

How come I never heard anyone mention that Smil th of Wooton
Major is in the December issue of Redbook?

It doesn't seem either, that I've heard of an album titled "Down
to Middle-earth" by The Hobbits (Decca DL 74920). The cover
is (ptui) psychedelie, and the contents seem to have as little
to do with JRRT as H. P. Lovecraft has with HPL. Haven't lis-
tened to it, wouldn't waste my time-I just spotted this in a re-
cord store and took a quick look.

CHRIS JONES | Ny Ny 10027.

In answer to Bob Foster, the "swollen brooding thing" in the ant-
hill is the queen ant. Robert Heinlein's Starship Trooper describes
a highly unpleasant insect-like race which also has 'swollen

art by Cynthia Goldstone
I ran across something interesting the other day while reading Malory (the edition from the Winchester MS; there is therein a tale called Balin, or The Knight with Two Swords). Strange that the name of the would-be Lord of Morgia should by happenstance pop up in the Arthurian legends, isn’t it? I also came by a clipping from Sept. 22 Los Angeles Times noting that the L. A. Mythopoetic Society was holding Bilbo’s Birthday Party, which was, evidently, quite an event, to get into the papers.

And, oh yes, in Gustav Davidson’s A Dict ionary of Angels--a very nice book to have, though expensive--there is listed an angel called Elberith (more commonly Balberith), who is said to be an ex-prince of the order of Cherubim and to be now the chief notary public in Hell. It makes me wonder how much angelological lore Tolkien knows.

There is something I would like to throw open for comment. Recently I wrote William Ready, author of the Tolkien Relation, asking whether he thought that Denethor, Saruman, Sauron, Boromir, and even Frodo were punished for hubris in making, or otherwise messing with One Ring. Classicists at Mount Holyoke College all thought that there was some value to the idea, but to quote Mr. Ready’s letter, hubris is Levantine and hence, he said, irrelevant. But I can’t see throwing out the idea that fast, especially when I think it has some value. Whether anyone else does however, is a moot point. (I read Lin Carter’s book on Tolkien; it’s great, especially the part in which he traces the heroic tradition from Callimachus on. Hubris there on my part.)

Although the translation of the word “Silmarillion” is dreadfully obvious, Lin Carter seemed completely unaware of it when he discussed the new book in his Look Behind the Lord of the Rings. Your pardon if I ascribe his faults to the Socie in general.

The root is, of course, silmaril, great jewel, the suffix is ion, as in Eldarion, Anarion, Tar-Aldarion, etc. where, (pardon the unprofessional terminology), it serves to convey the idea of the third person. Thus we have “he of the Silmaril” or “the idiot with the Silmaril,” strikingly parallel, I think, to “the Lord of the Rings.”
In an article in TJ#2, it says that a Mr. Dick Tedham named his dog Samwise. I doubt if Tolkien or Sam would appreciate that. But what really startled me is that he named his firstborn daughter Arwen Elanor. Boy, that guy must really take LOTR seriously, although Arwen is a beautiful name.

Who is that on the cover of TJ#9 (Vol 3, #3)? If you say it is Frodo and Sam, I won’t believe it. [No one in particular-ERM]

In the Shire-Post, there is an article by a D. Musselman, stating that he thinks all the associatin of food and drink is a little bit astirne, in so many words. Well I hate to say this, but I agree to some extent on the food part. Seed Cake Balin, Apple Tart Bilfur, Pippin’s White Cake. Oh Really????? However, I see nothing wrong with buttons and Happy Birthday Frodo and Bilbo.

I am writing this letter on behalf of The Tolkien Society of Sweden, in order to establish contact and correspondence with you personally and with our fellow organizations in USA. Our Society is only a little over a year old, so we are glad for all kinds of information we could possibly get from you. Please spread this out, and tell everybody that we are interested in any kind of correspondence on Tolkien subjects.

I have been compiling a list of references to Tolkien in books, magazines, etc. One is in the introduction to Kennedy’s translation of Beowulf, published by Oxford Press. In this case there is an excerpt from Tolkien’s scholarly masterpiece, Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics. In the Penguin book, The Earliest English Poems in which the appendix includes a passage from Tolkien’s Preparatory Remarks to J. R. Clauhall’s translation of Beowulf. In this case the selection is concerned with Anglo-Saxon Metric.

Two more recent additions to my list are the inclusion of LOTR in Frank N Magill’s Masterpieces of Literature in Digest Form, series 4, which isn’t quite as bad as it sounds, including fairly accurate summaries of the three volumes with fair notes. Last of all is the inclusion of Tolkien in a new edition of the Readers Advisor. Included is a list of Tolkien’s works, a few short comments on the works, mention of other Tolkien materials (maps, posters, etc.) mention of the TSA and TJ, and a listing of books about Tolkien.

I’m the President of the Thomson Hobbit Society. This club was formed when a few students found out that they all had the J.R.R. Tolkien books in common. So far we have gotten letters from almost every state and outside the USA from people who would like to join our club, but our club is not well formed. We have between 25-30 people. [How did they hear of your group? ERM]

Let’s make Snoopy an honorary Hobbit.