

Winter 1-15-1970

## Introduction

Richard C. West

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### Introduction

## ORCRIST

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## DEDICATION

For Deborah Webster

critic, composer, poet  
who has heard the horns of elfland

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Editorial	P. 2
THE GENRE OF <i>THE LORD OF THE RINGS</i>	Alexis Levitin	4
CONTEMPORARY MEDIEVAL AUTHORS	Richard C. West	9
HOBBITS: COMMON LENS FOR HEROIC EXPERIENCE	David M. Miller	11
TOLKIEN AND COLERIDGE	Clyde S. Kilby	16
AT THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND: GEORGE MACDONALD: A CENTENNIAL APPRECIATION	Glenn E. Sadler	20
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TOLKIEN CRITICISM: SUPPLEMENT TWO	Richard West	22

## LAYOUT &amp; ARTWORK BY THE MYTHOPOEIC SOCIETY

Art Editor and layout design - Glen GoodKnight  
Lettering - George Barr, p. 9; Bruce McMenomy, pp. 2, 4, 11, 16, 20, 22.  
Art -- George Barr, pp. 4, 7, 9, 10.  
Bonnie Bergstrom, pp. 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 24.  
Steve Fabian, p. 3.  
Tim Kirk, pp. 1, 3, 14, 16.  
Bruce McMenomy, pp. 2, 15, 19.  
Diana Paxson, p. 20.  
Bernie Zuber, pp. 12, 13.  
Cover by Tim Kirk; The Hornberg in Helm's Deep.

## INTRODUCTION

In May, 1968, the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee sponsored a Secondary Universe Conference of lectures and panel discussions on various aspects of science-fiction and fantasy. The original plan was for these papers to be published in a special issue of *Arts in Society*, but material was so abundant that the editors of that periodical decided to limit the issue exclusively to science-fiction. It seemed a great pity for such outstanding fantasy studies to be scattered about in diverse journals or left unpublished, so we of the U. W. Tolkien Society decided to collect them in this special issue of *Orcrist*.

Richard West's paper is a revision of the talk he gave at UWM as a member of a panel on "The Twentieth-Century Romance." Prof. Glenn Sadler was also part of that panel, but the talk he gave on Charles Williams is not yet in organized written form, so he offered us instead an appreciation of George MacDonald originally intended for a Scottish newspaper. Prof. Clyde Kilby's keynote address at the Secondary Universe Conference will be published in the special issue of *AIS*, but *Orcrist* has gained this shorter paper. Prof. David Miller became known to Tolkien scholars with his excellent paper delivered at the Mankato State College Tolkien Symposium in 1966, and we are very pleased to be able to publish this other enlightening essay from his pen. Mr. Alexis Levitin's article was originally the first chapter of his Master of Arts thesis on *The Lord of the Rings* (Columbia, 1964), and appears here very slightly revised (also, the editor has added references to some of the more recent criticism in the sixth, fifteenth, and seventeenth notes).

The alert reader will have noticed from the title page that *Orcrist* has now merged with the Tolkien Society of America and its *Tolkien Journal*. *Orcrist* will continue to be edited independently and numbered separately, but it will now be sent to TSA members as part of their membership dues. The UWTs thus can send its bulletin to nearly everyone who would be interested in reading it, and the TSA can supply a Tolkien magazine more frequently than if only *TJ* was distributed.

*Orcrist* is basically a scholarly journal and not a fanzine; though we trust that (to borrow terms used by Charles Williams) it is not "dying and scholarly" but "living and intelligent." The greater part of the contents of *Orcrist* will usually be made up of scholarly and critical articles; we hope that they do not "murder to dissect" but are informed by the joy of reading and the adventure of literary investigation, and are interesting reading in themselves. Literary studies need not be as barren and dull as they too often are. Study should not deaden the excitement of the subject, but enrich our experience of the work in some way: by setting it in perspective, examining the bases of its art, exploring its aesthetic effects, illuminating its meanings. The proper relation between a scholar-critic and a text is not parasitic, but symbiotic.



Intelligence and fun are such harmonious qualities that we can serve them both. *Orcrist* also has published in the past, and will do so in the future, poetry, parodies, music, and other entertainments. *Orcrist* is intended partly as a vehicle for the efforts of UWTs members that we think worth preserving, but we are also grateful for any contributions sent to us that meet our editorial policies and standards. Our center of interest, of course, is Tolkien, but we are also interested in any related topic.

The better part of a year has passed since the second issue of *Orcrist* appeared, and much has happened. William Ready set out to confuse bibliographers, first, by publishing an article completely different from his book, but under the same title, "The Tolkien Relation," and later by reprinting his book, *The Tolkien Relation*, in paperback under the vastly different title of *Understanding Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings*. Ballantine Books has continued its cam-

paign to make good fantasies readily available with the softcover publication of Peter S. Beagle's *The Last Unicorn*, E. R. Eddison's *Mezentian Gate* (the final volume of his Zimiamvian tetralogy), Merwyn Peake's Titus Groan trilogy, Tolkien's *Farmer Giles of Ham* & *Smith of Wootton Major* in one volume, and a series of Adult Fantasy novels selected by Lin Carter (now initiated with Fletcher Pratt's *The Blue Star* and Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's Daughter*). Ballantine also published this year Lin Carter's noble but flawed effort, *Tolkien: A Look Behind The Lord of the Rings*. Mr. Carter writes with such verve that he may have the happy effect of sending readers to the old epics, romances, sagas, lays and novels he cites as forerunners of Tolkien, but they will most decidedly be disappointed if they expect them to be like modern fantasy novels. Notre Dame Press has knit up all this feast by releasing a paperback edition of its fine anthology of essays, *Tolkien and the Critics*.



An excellent new periodical focusing on Tolkien, Lewis, and Williams started publication this year: *Mythlore*, edited by Glen Good-Knight for the Mythopoeic Society (504 Elm Street, Alhambra, California 91801). It is nicely illustrated, and the articles tend to be varied, entertaining, and intelligent. (four issues for \$2.50).

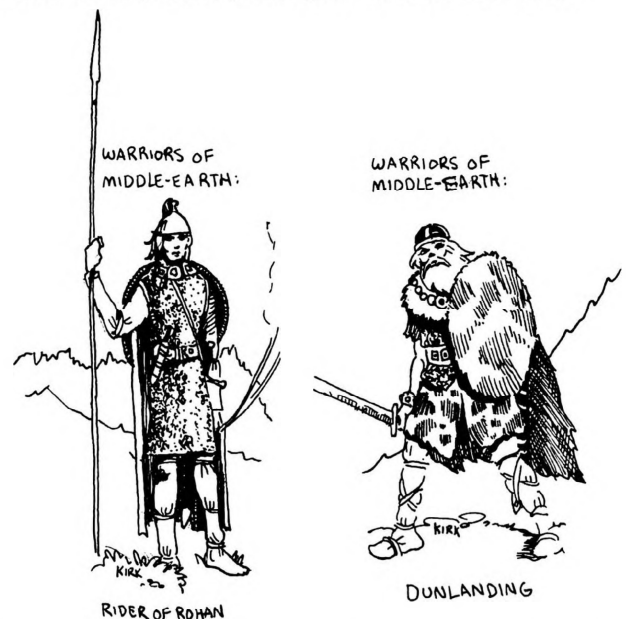
It has also been an interesting year for the U. W. Tolkien Society. It began last September (1968) with a Medieval Fair on the Madison campus, to which all U. W. student organizations were invited but in which, disappointingly, only a couple participated. The UWTS by sheer determination made a colorful afternoon of it anyway. A booth was set up displaying the multitude of interests of Society members, Tolkienian maps and posters were mounted, and a tape recorder regaled passers-by with *Poems and Songs of Middle Earth* and the themes from *Star Trek* and *The Prisoner*. Royce Buehler lolled on the grass in hobbit dress, his otherwise bare feet covered with the hair carefully saved for weeks from numerous trimmings. Duane Dobry came armed and armored as an orc-soldier, with the Eye of Sauron painted in red on his shield. Dick West, coerced into beard, eyebrows, silver scarf, and flowing robes, made a reluctant Gandalf the White. Carl and Paulette Carroll appeared garbed as Arthur and Guenevere; and Debby Webster came over from Green Bay in black tights and make-up, announcing herself as a Medieval Vice. Bill Orr chose a futuristic theme instead, and his Vulcan costume included pointed ears. As you might imagine, the group attracted no little notice. We adjourned to a local tavern afterwards for liquid refreshment and *pour épater les bourgeois*, and then ended the evening with a party.



At this, Editor West discovered that *Orcrest* #2 (just published) was collated very quickly by having the pages passed round a circle while singing rondels; so when, this spring, *Orcrest* #1 was reprinted for the second time, he insidiously got it collated by repeating the procedure at another party.

After the Medieval Fair, the UWTS settled into a schedule of two meetings a month, alternating a business meeting at which a paper was read or some topic set for discussion, with a party. (Most of us like parties). Activities conducted over the last year included a birthday party January 3rd in honor of Tolkien, a showing of slides of Oxford University, and a dramatic reading of "The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun." A number of performances were given of *Queen Ann*, a play by Paulette Carroll with both a medieval and a modern setting, twice under UWTS auspices. A Free University course in "Tolkien and Modern Fantasy" was offered in the spring semester on Tuesday evenings, with Richard West moderating discussions of *The Hobbit*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Till We Have Faces*, *The Once and Future King*, *Phantastes*, *Tree and Leaf*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and *Smith of Wootton Major*. For the first time in three years, rain and cold weather made it impossible to hold our Annual Picklick at Picnic Point, so we obstinately moved indoors; festivities included listening to tapes of old radio shows and World War II news, with the *pièce de résistance* the Orson Welles dramatization of *War of the Worlds*.

One notable excursion was made last Easter week-end to Minneapolis, for the second "Minicon" science-fiction convention. This had nothing of specifically Tolkienian interest, but a delegation from Madison attended disguised as sf fans. The con had a showing of an old silent film called *Metropolis* (which pretended to be science-fiction but failed to be worthwhile from any point of view), a fascinating *Star Trek* slide show conducted by Ruth Berman, a panel with Clifford Simak, Gordon Dickson, and Charles DeVet, and parties on Good Friday and Holy Saturday evenings at which the distinguished



authors could be met socially. The panel began as a discussion of what might be called the economics of science-fiction (rate of pay for stories over the years and so on), and continued on this topic for an agonizingly long time. John Bullis growled wonderment at when the panelists would start talking about novels instead of how much they got for them. And Paulette Carroll passed a note to Ivor Rogers asking: "Can't we think of a good question from the floor to change the subject? (signed) Desperate Madison hobbits." Ivor read the message, looked at us with an expression of complete astonishment, and said, "But I'm *interested* in this!" Fortunately for the rest of us, John and a few others diverted the discussion to audiences of mass media, favorite books of the authors, the genesis of *City*, and other such matters of more general appeal. Most of us got the autograph of one author or another (Clifford Simak was the man we had gone specially to see, and even Dick West shyly pushed a copy of *Way Station* into his view and quietly indicated a desire to have it inscribed); and Paulette Carroll, who had approached Mr. Simak from the rear of the platform and remained talking with him for some time,



thus inadvertently (she claims) got into all the photographs taken of the panelists. Undaunted, she autographed the photos herself, and later presented Mr. Simak with an inscribed copy of her play, *Queen Ann*. The other notable event on this trip was automobile trouble encountered on the drive out to Minnesota, which for a while looked as if it would keep us from finishing the journey. John Bullis saved the situation by fastening some unruly engine parts with some S&H Green Stamps, and we had no further trouble with the car for the remainder of the trip, going either to or from Minneapolis. Such ingenuity deserves to be immortalized in the pages of *Orcrist*.

UWTS elections were held May 8th, with the result that Richard West was re-elected President (*Yegh*), and William Orr Secretary-Treasurer (*Gimli*), for the next academic year. James Robinson, however, has resigned as co-editor of *Orcrist*, apologizing that he will not be able to do enough to justify such status.

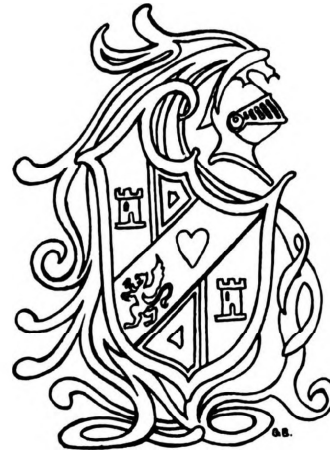
To date, too few misprints have been located in *Orcrist* #2 to bother with a separate page of errata. The following corrections should be made if they were not entered when copies were sent out: on page iv in the last paragraph, the initials of Prof. Cunliffe should read "W. G." instead of "W. E.", and the second series of initials in the signature should be "J. B. R." and not "J. A. R." (someday Editor West will learn what his friends' initials are); on page 11, "showmaker" in line 20 should read "shoemaker", and "Arawn's mythology" in line 27 is a mistake for "Alexander's mythology"; finally, item B46.1 in the bibliography on page 45 should end "which confront him" (the pronoun had been omitted). I also forgot, in the credits for last issue, to thank Mrs. Paulette Carroll for putting the lyrics and music for "Sing Along With Tolkien" on the masters.

For this third issue, I am pleased to thank Mr. Carl Carroll and Mrs. Julie Redding for their help with typing and Mrs. Redding for bravely doing most of the lettering, Mrs. Frances Wood and Miss Genevieve Gogot for tolerating my wear and tear on their typewriters,

Ed Meskys and Ivor Rogers for their assistance in making printing arrangements, and the gentle reader who has borne this lengthy introduction.

Remember to vote for Madison in 2001.

R. C. W.  
June, 1969



# The Genre of THE LORD OF THE RINGS

BY Alexis Levitin

The genre of *The Lord of the Rings* is intimately related to its subject matter. A rather thorough examination of the various literary genres of which Tolkien's work partakes will throw considerable light on its nature and purpose.

Tolkien's trilogy is, first of all, a fantasy, in that it concerns a world where fantastic, magical events occur, events which are unknown to us in what we call real life. There is an aura of "strangeness and wonder" in the telling of the tale, a quality which Tolkien designates as a primary element of fantasy, and an essential constituent of any fairy story. Considering Tolkien's great interest in fairy stories, it is not surprising to find that his trilogy displays many characteristics of this genre. In an essay entitled "On Fairy-Stories," Tolkien says, "a 'fairy-story' is one which touches on or uses Faërie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy. Faërie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic..."<sup>2</sup> In effect, Faërie is a land unlike any with which we are familiar, a land where magic is always to be expected, where the inexplicable often occurs. It should be noted that a fairy story may have several different purposes, which do not prevent it from retaining its function as a fairy story. Tolkien mentions adventure, morality, and fantasy as three possible purposes of a fairy story, and he intertwines these three elements throughout his own work.

In discussing the desired effect of the fairy story, Tolkien emphasizes the importance of the internal credibility of the artist's creation.

He says, "...the story-maker proves a successful sub-creator. He makes a secondary world which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is true: it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed."<sup>3</sup> Later Tolkien adds, "Probably every writer making a secondary world, a fantasy, every sub-creator, wishes in some measure to be a real maker, or hopes that he is drawing on reality: hopes that the peculiar quality of this secondary world (if not all the details) are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it."<sup>4</sup>

The idea of drawing on reality may well stem from Coleridge's widely-known formulation concerning imagination: "The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception; and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation."<sup>5</sup> Coleridge's treatment of the secondary imagination as an echo of the primary, which itself is our finite view of the Infinite, is almost precisely the same as Tolkien's concept of the derivation of the secondary world from true Reality.<sup>6</sup> All this should be kept in mind when we consider, presently, Tolkien's theory integrating the Christian myth with the common fairy story, propounding the belief that such tales are human attempts to imitate the divine fairy story created by God, namely, the story of Christ and our Redemption.