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Dear Mistress Ellwood

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England

Congratulations on Mythlore. It is much, much better than similar British productions. These are mostly poor in quality of writing and cranky in substance. They seem obsessed with details, such as the mean temperature of a Balrog and the average speed of a Ringwraith from Mordor to Minas Tirth...Your Mythlore is full of good things.

I was fascinated by the article on Shardik—in my humble opinion a very great book. I felt the author had the main message, but I’m not sure there was anything to bring in shamanism. Shardik’s message applies to all Revelation. We try to manipulate it instead of simply waiting on it, watching and learning. And in all religion, the sinner–turning–saint may find he has to be “perfected in suffering,” like St. Paul. (“what great things he must suffer for my name’s sake...”)

Elleroth does not change his name; here two distinct characters are confused. The most brilliant part of the book is the ‘report’ by the educated, liberal and enlightened Ambassador to his philosopher-king. He reports the “superstition” says he finds it charming...and that it might be “useful” in “our own country” to help people care more for children. In his kindly, so-clever way, he also seeks to manipulate by condescension and patronage; he, too, never asks “Is it true? Can it be that it really was a Revelation? And if so, what does it mean?” (The clue is in the quote from Jung on flyleaf.)

I knew Richard Adams at Oxford (Worcester College). He is a Christian and very much an Anglican.

Anne Scott
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England

In Mythlore 18 Michael Haykin’s article about a conversation in Charles Williams’ The Place of the Lion fills me with the desire to re-write Pope’s famous line as “Great dealt of learning is a dangerous thing...” Mr. Haykin’s profound knowledge of patristic history and literature enable him to state conclusively that St. Ignatius of Antioch never wrote a treatise against the Gnostics, and to wonder whether Charles Williams was making an ignorant blunder, or confusing St. Ignatius with some other second century Christian author such as St. Ireneaus. He rightly concludes that the knowledge of the period and its controversies shown in Charles Williams’ The Descent of the Dove makes this solution “extremely unlikely”. He therefore goes on to suggest a very subtle and learned train of thought linking the gnostis of second century heretics with that aspired to by some of the characters in The Place of the Lion.

But may I, as one who was one of the many who shared the privilege of Charles Williams’ friendship during the last five years of his life, assure Mr. Haykin that in this passage Charles Williams was making something much simpler than an esoteric historical allusion? He was making a joke. Anthony, wishing to signal unobtrusively his wish to talk privately to a young bookseller’s assistant, attracts his attention by asking for a book which does not and could not exist: Mr. Richardson indicates that he has taken the point by replying in the same vein. If Charles Williams’ interests lay in nineteenth century history, the conversation might have gone:

"Have you by any change an edition of Abraham Lincoln’s personal appeal to Queen Victoria?" he asked in a low clear voice.

The young assistant looked gravely back.

"Not for sale I’m afraid," he said. "Nor if it comes to that, Queen Victoria’s personal appeal to Abraham Lincoln." "Quite" Anthony answered.

In Charles Williams’ early novels this instant recognition of congeniality of mind in a new acquaintance is not uncommon (see, for example, the first meeting between Kenneth Mornington and the Duke of the North Ridings in the 8th Chapter of War in Heaven.

Frederic Luther
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In preparing a biography of John Benjamin Dancer, a man who was born in Clerkenwell, London, on 8 October 1812, I have found reason to believe he may have been a first cousin of the grandfather of J.R.R. Tolkien.

That grandfather, named John Benjamin Tolkien, was born in 1807 in London, according to Humphrey Carpenter’s biography of J.R.R. Tolkien. John Benjamin Dancer’s mother was Anna Maria Tolkien, born 1779 or 1780, and her marriage to Josiah Dancer at the church of St. James, Clerkenwell, was witnessed by “J.B.” and “E.” Tolkien.

Can you tell me if these witnesses were the parents of both Anna Maria Tolkien Dancer and John Benjamin Tolkien, J.R.R.’s grandfather?. What were the prenames represented by the initials “JB” and “E”? And what was the address and type of business followed by those parents of J.R.R. Tolkien, John Benjamin Tolkien?

Edgar L. Chapman
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It is unfortunate that Father Walter Hooper seems to have misrepresented his credentials, as Kathryn Lindskoog has demonstrated. Everything that Father Hooper has done as literary executor of the Lewis papers, and as editor of Lewis’s unpublished materials must thereby be subject to a certain amount of reasonable doubt. The best thing for Father Hooper to do to restore trust would be make the unpublished versions of the Lewis papers already published available to the public and to other Lewis scholars so that his work as an editor can be evaluated. If Hooper’s editing has been judicious and sensible, then he should be judged with charity. If the editorial work shows some serious errors, then Hooper should still be judged with charity, but the criticisms and corrections of other scholars who care greatly about Lewis’ work are necessary and inevitable. Kathryn Lindskoog has certainly raised some significant questions, and nothing could be more ridiculous to the secular world than to have Lewis’ followers divided into an acrimonious dispute between Hooper loyalists and those sceptical about Hooper’s work. Nor can Father Hooper ultimately evade the questions raised about his work. Silence is not the answer.

(See page 40)

George H. Thomson
655 Echo Drive
Ottawa

(reprint of letter sent to The Citizen, Baxter Road, Ottawa, Ontario)

My complaint is against T-K Graphics
P. O. Box 1951
Baltimore, Md. 21203

It is a mail-order book supplier specializing in fantasy, science fiction, etc. I had previous dealings with them which were satisfactory,
On Jan. 8, 1977 I ordered the following:

The Tolkien Companion, Tyler 12.95
Lord of the Elves and Eldils, Purtill 1.50
Tolkien and the Silmarillion, 3.95
Total 18.40

A U.S. Money Order for $18.40 was enclosed.

On April 20, 1977 I ordered:

Tolkien: A Biography, Carpenter 10.00
(Also a book by Noel, $7.95, which was after some delay received) $28.40

A U.S. Money Order covering Noel plus the $10.00 was enclosed.

None of the books except Noel arrived.

On Jan. 16, 1978 I wrote requesting that the books be sent or my money refunded. On a post card postmarked 27 Jan. 1978 I was informed that they were "currently processing a refund." When this did not arrive I wrote on April 3, 1978 demanding the refund. A post card late in April informed me that a refund had been sent, check #4487. "If you have not by now received this, please let us know so we may void that check and issue a new one." I wrote on May 6, 1978 asking them to issue a new check since the previous one had not been received.

I have not heard a word since then and it appears my $28.40 U.S. is gone forever - unless you can shock them into responsible behaviour.

I am sending a copy of this letter to T-K Graphics; also a copy to Mythlore whose editor and readers should be especially interested in the negligence of this company, both in supplying books advertised and in refunding money.

Margaret L. Carter 10439 Len Court Lakeside, Calif. 92040

We know from a quotation in Letters to Malcolm that C. S. Lewis had read Thomas Traherne's Centuries. Analysis of this book of meditations, from the late 1600's, discloses two important influences upon Lewis' work.

In the lyrical "Great Dance" section of Perelandra Lewis says:

Each thing was made for Him. He is the centre. Because we are with Him, each of us is at the centre...In His city all things are made for each...If each man had been the only man made, He would have done no less. Each thing, from the single grain of Dust to the strongest eldil, is the end and the final cause of all creation...

Chapter X of Letters to Malcolm makes the similar point that "every being is both an end and a means." The author elaborates, "The great work of art was made for the sake of all it does and is, down to the curve of every wave and the flight of every insect."

Turning to Centuries, we find that this idea that all Creation is God's gift to every single man is Traherne's major theme. The avowed subject is the winning of Felicity through the contemplation of God's love, and the quickest route to such Felicity is by realizing the bounty of God's gifts to us. For example, "as he maketh one, so he maketh every one the end of the World...I alone am the end of the World: Angels and men being all mine" (First Century, Meditation 15). "The Laws of God discover all that is therein to be created for your sake" (First Century, Meditation 20).

In Letters to Malcolm Lewis unfolds a second principle important to his world-view, a theory of adoration. Chapter XVII tells the secret of finding and worshipping God in pleasures, even the smallest pleasures of everyday life. To enjoy God's gifts without recognizing their source is blindness. "It (the pleasure) is a message. We know we are being touched by a finger of that right hand at which there are pleasures for evermore." "We...shall not be able to adore God on the highest occasions if we have learned no habit of doing so on the lowest."

Seeing "patches of Godlight" (Lewis' phrase) in the most commonplace blessings, usually taken for granted, is one of Traherne's major motifs. For instance, he devotes several meditations to the sun, discussing the benefits It gives us and how much we would appreciate the sun if it were taken away. His attitude may be summed up in the statement, "You never enjoy the world aright, till you see how a sand exhibiteth the wisdom and power of God" (First Century, Meditation 27). Lewis' caution that we must learn adoration, from the small to the great, is foreshadowed by Traherne (First Century, Meditation 21):

By the very right of your senses you enjoy the World...If you be not faithful in esteeming these; who shall put into your hands the true Treasures? ...For there is a disease in him who despiseth present mercies, which till it be cured, he can never be happy.

I conclude that we find in Traherne sources for two of Lewis' important motifs: (1) every part of God's Creation is essential, every providence is a special providence; (2) pleasures are expositions of Divine glory.
First of all, I'd like to congratulate you on the work you've been doing. Though I never really lost faith that the issues would arrive sometime, it is nice to be able to look forward to their coming on time. The issues themselves have been most enjoyable, too. I like the new column, "Cavalier Treatment," and I was most impressed by the cover of #20. It has been a long time since I've seen a Tim Kirk cover.

I'm looking forward to seeing the branch reports in upcoming issues. From time to time I've had a pipe dream about starting one here in the New York/New Jersey area, but I never was acquainted with enough people interested enough to try it. Also I could never think of a suitable name....

Ruth Berman  
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I was interested by article on Arthurian Heraldry in Mythlore 20. Others interested in the subject might want to know of two items written for the Society of Creative Anachronism: my "Arthurian Heraldry" (in Tournaments Illuminated Vol. XI no. 4, 1977, pp. 32-39) is a somewhat fuller survey of the various Arthurian shields combined with a discussion of the Arthurian heraldry of Williams, Tennyson (with discussion of Williams' use of Tennyson's heraldry), Bulwer Lytton, and Twain; Fabulous Heraldry by Alfgar the Sententious is a compilation of legendary and fictional arms from a vast variety of sources. Information on back issues of Tournaments Illuminated is available from Gavin Kilkenny of Kilcarren c/o Peter M. Ellis, 4224 Osage Ave. #22, Phila., Pa. 19104; Fabulous Heraldry was put out by Societas Illuminata, 141 Elm Str, Somerville, MA 02143.

Valerie Hughes Protopapas  
14 Partridge Lane  
Huntington Station  
New York 11746

Re the article on heraldry by Antoinette Bretoni; the beasts on the arms of England are indeed leopards (as Arthur's) and not lions. One speaks of the lilies and leopards of England.

(Name withheld)

I would like to thank the Mythcon committee for their labor in putting on this year's "Con. It is a huge job, and they should not go unnoticed.

I especially enjoyed meeting Annette Harper, who had been only a name to me before, and was happy to find her so human and approachable. I'd also like to mention Edith Crowe's lecture and slides, which were very insightful.

If I may be forgiven a "but," I don't think the Hyatt House was the best choice for location. It's a little out of my class; I suspect that was true for others too, and is part of the reason so few people came from the Los Angeles area.

Past 'Cons held on college campuses, with dining hall tickets, cost much less. I understand, too, that in the past the Society realized a modest profit from 'Cons, which helped to keep us afloat. Well, happily this one at least broke even, so the committee members didn't end up holding the bag.

One more complaint—I hope that at future 'Cons the members will make a little more effort to stick to the schedule. Once or twice a panel decided by acclaim to continue past its closing time, resulting in virtually no one showing at the following event.

Despite the complaints, overall I would give it a large plus.

Mary Janis Johnson  
3553 Liberty Ave SE  
Hubbard, Ohio

I realize $10 won't cure all your ills, but maybe it will help some.

...Could someone there please let me know if you have any branches in Cleveland, Ohio and Berkeley, California? I'll probably be going to computer school in Cleveland soon, and would like a few fellow Tolkienites to hang out with. If I can manage it, I'd then be moving to Berkeley.

FANTASY AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

GLEN H. GOODKNIGHT

The above title was the same used for the Editorial of the first issue of Mythlore, dated January 1969. In retrospect, that editorial seems now to echo the intense political and cultural awareness of the late 60's. It dealt with alternatives of the time: (1) destroy the system, (2) drop out, or (3) what was advocated - to work within the system; (1) destroy the system, (2) drop out, or (3) what was advocated - to work within the system.

The frequent claim of the critics in the 60's was that fantasy is escapist. After 13 years, meeting many hundreds of people in many circumstances through the Society, I can affirm that it certainly can be for some. Fantasy is a kind of neutral imaginative power that can take many directions and forms, depending on the individual. Some enthusiasts of fantasy are a condensed cross-section of our culture who show a desire for personal fulfillment without the restraints of external conditions. This is a natural desire, but it may from time to time come into sharp confrontation with external reality.

What was the reason Tolkien, Lewis, and Williams wrote their works? I think it was significantly different. The examples of Frodo Baggins, Elwin Ransom and Taliesin, among others, show us heroes who were not motivated for personal satisfaction. They encountered circumstances that challenged their own inner character, and through vicarious identification, our own characters. Through them we have the opportunity to be genuinely enriched. With the imaginative power of fantasy we may visit numerous places such as the Undying West, the Utter East, and Sarras. In such places, and others less transcendent, we may encounter a kind of "magic," which with admitted difficulty, can be brought back to enhance and transform our perception of daily reality. Like Niggle's picture, fantasy gives us a chance to see the beauty beyond, if we have the eyes to see. Compared to transformed perspective, the other aspects of fantasy are negligible: living jewels turned to handfuls of plastic baubles, stamped "Frodo Lives!" in day-glo paint.