Summer 7-15-1969

Across the Brandywine

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Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol1/iss3/11

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The resurgence of fantasy books is now in full swing. Doubtless this phenomena is due to the success of *The Lord of the Rings*. Since the paperback editions came out in this country bookstores and newsstands have been invaded by books whose cover blurbs proclaim that they are written "in the tradition of Tolkien." This publicity gimmick is unjustifiable in the case of books which are "jumping on the bandwagon" and yet some others could be considered as mythopoeic as Tolkien's works. Classics of the genre that hadn't seen print in many years are now available in paperbacks. Quite a few publishers have released single fantasy novels or even series, but I would like to concentrate on the one publisher whose paperbacks have stood out whenever I've looked at the bookshelves. I'm referring to Ballantine Books who published *The Hobbit* and *LotR* in 1965 and *The Tolkien Reader* in 1966. Spurred by their initial success they continued to bring forth fantasy books such as *The Worm Ouroboros* and its sequels by E. R. Eddison, Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* trilogy, *A Voyage to Arcturus* by David Lindsay and *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle. This year they published Tolkien's *Farmer Giles of Ham* and *Smith of Wootton Major* under one cover and created yet another item for Tolkien-fans. This is a book entitled *Tolkien: A Look Behind "The Lord of the Rings"* written by Lin Carter (previously known for his sword and sorcery stories). This informative book not only tells about Tolkien's life but also about his inspirational sources and the origins of fantasy. While reading it I learned of Greek, Roman and Medieval writers I had never heard of before. This book also served as an introduction to Lin Carter's new position as editor of a whole series of Adult Fantasy books from Ballantine. The first in this series was *The Blue Star* by Fletcher Pratt and the second, just released, is *The King of Elfland's Daughter* by Lord Dunsany. Now I'll have a chance to read a Dunsany book after hearing so much about him from some members of the mythopoeic! Upcoming books in this series will be *The Wood Beyond the World* by William Morris, *The Land of Unreason* by Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp, *The Silver Stallion* by James Branch Cabell and *Lilith* by George MacDonald. Look for them at your local stores. The colorful Ballantine covers are hard to miss (and I'm glad they've finally let the artists sign the art that does so much to attract attention).

While the paperbacks are multiplying the science fiction and fantasy magazines are undergoing changes, hopefully for the better. Galaxy publications has recently changed owners, editors, etc. The changes are not yet evident but will be forthcoming. Meanwhile *Amazing* and *Fantastic* have acquired a new managing editor and the innovations are already visible. The new editor is Ted White, a New Yorker who has been in science fiction fandom for quite a few years as a fanzine editor and writer and has recently become a professional writer and editor. His fanzine writing has been controversial and his handling of a Worldcon was criticized but that is not uncommon among fans. It makes fandom a livelier world to be in. I'm curious to see how successful Ted will be as editor of those two magazines. I won't try to summarize the editorials in which he explains his background and his plans as editor. You should read them yourself. He makes his statements quite clearly.

The new features he has started in both magazines should prove to be
of interest. In *Amazing* it is "The Club House," a fanzine review by John D. Berry. In this first installment (July issue) 5 fanzines are reviewed at length and 16 others briefly. Fanzine editors are asked to send in their publications but Berry promises to be merciless in his criticisms. I sent our second issue to Ted White and I'm curious to see what the results will be, if any. In *Fantastic* the new feature is called "Fantasy Fandom" and it will consist of articles reprinted from fanzines. The first is "Tolkien and Temperaments" by Bill Nyers which was first published in a fanzine called *Void* in 1962. This article tells of Nyers' childhood background and its influence on his appreciation of Tolkien. It is an interesting study of one man's sincere reaction to Tolkien. I would like to see such articles in *Mythlore*.

The problem with reviewing professional magazines is much the same as with fanzine reviews. By the time your article is read the particular issue in question may no longer be available. In the case of fanzines, the editor may have mailed out all his copies (unless the run is large and advertised as such). With the magazines it's a question of distribution. I've often tried to figure out when the new issues come in, and the old ones are pulled out, but without much luck. I mention this in case you have trouble finding the July *Amazing* and the August *Fantastic*. If you're lucky, you may live near a used bookstore which carries back issues of sf and fantasy magazines.

While we're on the subject of prozines I would like to call your attention to the July issue of *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. It contains a special section on Fritz Leiber, who, as you may know, is equally at home with either fantasy or science fiction. One of his very best novels, *Conjure Wife*, dealt very convincingly with modern-day witchcraft. *The Wanderer*, his sf novel about an alien planet approaching the Earth won a Hugo in 1965. He is also credited for inventing the term "sword & sorcery" to describe swashbuckling fantasies such as his own stories of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. In addition to enjoying his work, I've had the pleasure of meeting Fritz and I found him to be a most fascinating gentleman. You should hear him reciting poetry at convention parties! Anyway...the *F & SF* issue includes a short novel by Leiber, a poem by him, a profile about him by Judith Merril and a bibliography of his works. The cover by Ed Emsh is a portrait of Fritz Leiber and some of his fictional characters.

In this column, last issue, I wrote in some detail about Bennie Bergstrom's art work. Meanwhile George Barr was quietly turning out two outstanding illustrations for *Mythlore* #2...the one for "Leonardo, Tolkien and Mr. Baggins" and the *Green Lady* from *Perelandra*. Now he's done it again! His portrait of Gollum for the cover of this issue is sure to attract attention (those eyes really get to me!). As the art editor I don't mean to emphasize one artist over the others but I must say that George has been very good to *Mythlore*. We are grateful for the time and care he has put into the art he has given us. George has been doing art for fanzines since 1958 and he has also participated in the art shows at conventions. What he can do with colored ballpoint pens has to be seen to be believed! I just stand there in speechless admiration when I see all those intricate little lines. Last year he won the Hugo for Best Fan Artist and has since moved from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles where he has been continuously besieged by local fanzine editors. Some of his best work can be seen in *Amra*, the sword
& sorcery fanzine, Shangri L'Affaires, the fanzine of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and Trumpet, a fanzine from Dallas, Texas, I highly recommend George's strip, The Broken Sword, adapted from a Poul Anderson story, which appeared in issues #4, 6, and 7 of Trumpet. I understand #7 is sold out but the other two are still available. The next issue, #10, will have a color cover by George from one of his best colored ballpoint pen paintings. The Broken Sword will continue in the following issue. Since his Hugo award George has also done professional illustrations for Galaxy (April '69) and If (March and July '69) which should serve to further his career. Meanwhile I hope he will be able to continue embellishing the pages of Mythlore.

The addresses of the fanzines mentioned above can be found at the end of my "World of Fanzines" column.

In closing I would like to mention that I'm looking forward to Westercon XXII which will be held at the Miramar hotel in Santa Monica over the July 4th weekend. There will be a Tolkien Society meeting and a special Mythopoeic meeting, with a panel discussion on Lewis, plus a Mythopoeic section of the Art Show. I should be able to report on those events in our next issue.

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I HAD MY PORTRAIT PAINTED BY TIM KIRK!

MINE WAS DONE BY GEORGE BARR!

WITH MY LUCK, I GOT ZUBER!