Fall 10-15-1970

Across the Brandwine

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The Counsel of Elrond

A longtime student of Charles Williams, this essay is a thoughtful appreciation of Williams' work and an exploration of the author's own journey into becoming a Williams enthusiast. The essay delves into the author's personal experiences with Williams' writing, highlighting significant works and offering insights into their impact. It also emphasizes the importance of Williams' contributions to contemporary thought, particularly in relation to fantasy literature, and discusses the author's sense of community within the Mythopoeic Society, which has fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of Williams' work.
has been an obvious resurgence of interest in the supernatural. In the March 1970 issue of Galaxy magazine I read yet another story of what happens after Death — "The Region Between" by Halie Ellison. Although Ellison’s approach is entirely different from the authors I’ve mentioned it does show curiosity and concern about the afterlife. Even though many of us wouldn’t like to think too deeply of Death we do have an insatiable curiosity about the Greatest Unknown.

The preceding paragraphs were written over two months ago. Various things prevented me from finishing this column promptly and the current preparations for our first Mythopoeic convention have caused even more delay. I had intended to give a fairly detailed account of the results from the Mythlore questionnaire which was sent out with our fourth issue. Its purpose was to find out more about our readers and what they liked or disliked about Mythlore. Results are still coming in but, unfortunately, lack of time and space make a lengthy analysis impossible. Briefly then, I would like to mention the more prominent aspects of the results. A strange “generation gap” appeared. Those who answered were either under 21 or over 30! The men outnumbered the women by a large margin but the students outnumbered the teachers by only a very slight margin. Returns were split evenly between California and out-of-state. Most of those who answered have never attended a Mythopoetic meeting and found out about Mythlore from various sources, although recent returns are mostly through the Tolkien Society. Lewis and Williams are more widely read than I would have expected and many other fantasy writers are also listed. Although some of those who answered have read science fiction most do not attend conventions and are familiar with only Tolkien-oriented fandoms. All are Tolkien fans, needless to say, even if they don’t belong to the TSA.

Mythlore was praised mostly for its illustrations, articles and editorial. Book reviews were well received too. Reaction to poetry, fiction and the letter column was mixed while the Elvish Dictionary was either praised or rejected. Fanzine reviews didn’t seem to attract much favor. We were criticized, rather severely in some instances, for the poor reproduction of our mimeograph and lack of good proofreading. The reproduction has been improved by offset printing (though the one person who recently criticized small type wouldn’t be happy). The proofreading situation now is constantly trying to improve. And, finally, the lady who asked for more material on Williams should love this issue.

Fantasy books continue to appear in our local bookstores, drugstores and newsstands. The Adult Fantasy series from Ballantine is going strong with several more titles promised for this Fall. You may have noticed that one of their recent books, Zothique by Clark Ashton Smith, has a wrap-around cover by none other than George Barr. I recommend the reader look at the first one in the series. It is inspired by one large illustration which I entered in the Westcon’XXIII art show.

There’s a new fantasy magazine coming out this August. It’s devoted mainly to fantasy classics long out of print and its title is, appropriately enough, Forgotten Fantasy. It’s published bi-monthly right here in Hollywood by Nectar Press. I’ve met both the editors and the publishers and they’re very enthusiastic about their publication and also very aware of the need to communicate with their readers. This kind of attitude deserves support and I wish them success.

In connection with an advertisement Kerdams Publishing Co. is placing in our Mythcon program book I’ve received an advance copy of a book which I think many people in the Mythopoeic Society will want to discuss. It’s entitled Good News from Middle Earth and it was written by Mrs. Gracia Pay Ellwood who is a member of our Western Marches branch. The book consists of two essays, “Everything Is Alive (On Magic in Middle Earth and Elsewhere)” and “The Use and Abuse of Imagination.” At this point I’ve read more of the second essay than the first but I can’t attempt a review. I will say, however, that you’re in for some surprises. Especially when you see those photos in the center section! This large Kerdams paperback sells for $3.25 and should be available very soon. Reviews should be interesting.

Descending upon Glen GoodKnight’s apartment is at best a hazardous adventure. If you are not lost forever among the labyrinthian stacks of old Mythologies, last month’s Mythprints, sticky sheets of mailing labels and piles of half-empty Fresca cans, if you make your way safely through this maze into the back bedroom (the fabled “Pit” of ancient legend), you will find crouching there in the gloomy depths, ever watching, ever waiting, that satanic figure of Guteknecht himself, eyes glinting in demonic glee, lost in his never-ending task of pasting up eight-by-ten-foot pages of Windows, registration-stamp-strewn envelopes. If you are not too careful, he will notice your empty, idle hands and immediately thrust into them an 80,000-word essay on the Jüngarian symbolism of Bilbo’s watch-chain to be typed up for Mythlore, or some other arduous task from which, alas, there is no escape save Death itself. And I suspect that Glen could find a way around even that. Suffice it to say I have been caught, to my shame, in the web of mythopoetic activity, not the least of which has been the writing of World of Fanzines for this issue of Mythlore. Bernie Zuber, the regular author of this column, has been swamped of late with an extraordinary amount of work, only part of which has been the production of the program-book for the Up-coming Mythcon, so it has come to pass that I have taken over this item for him.

Fantasy fandom has been an obvious resurgence of interest in the supernatural. In the past year or two I have read more of the second essay than of the first but I can’t attempt a review. I will say, however, that you’re in for some surprises. Especially when you see those photos in the center section! This large Kerdams paperback sells for $3.25 and should be available very soon. Reviews should be interesting.

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