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World of Fanzines

Alpajpuri

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World of Fanzines

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 Harlan 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 Mythlore 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 Mythopoeic 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 fanzines. 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 editorials. 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 won't be happy). The proofreading situation we are 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 stories in it too. The first one inspired me to do a large illustration which I entered in the Westerncon 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 Berdmans Publishing Co. is placing in our *Mythcon* I 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 Fay 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 Good Guys (A Study in Christ-Imagery)". At this point I've 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 Berdmans paperback sells for \$3.25 and should be available very soon. Reactions should be interesting.



COVER FATIGUE

World of Fanzines by Alpaipuri

Descending upon Glen GoodKnight's apartment is at best a hazardous adventure. If you are not lost forever among the labyrinthian stacks of old *Mythlores*, 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 GutKnecht himself, eyes glinting in demonical glee, lost in his never-ending task of pasting up eight-by-ten-foot pages of *Mythlore* (to be reduced down to postage-stamp size) — and 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 Jungian 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, lo these many weeks, in the web of mythopoeic arbit, 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.

The three fantasy-oriented publications I'm going to cover here are: *Tournaments Illuminated*, the journal of the Society for Creative Anachronism; *Wootton Major Journal*, published by the Brophy Smial of Phoenix, Arizona (now by the Valley of the Sun branch of the Mythopoeic Society); and Greg Shaw's *Best of Entmoot*. This latter item is a collection of the best articles, letters, and artwork that appeared over the years in *Entmoot*, the first fanzine (free, loose, casual) Tolkienzine of the middle sixties. The forty-three page *BoJ* contains: Don Simpson's tenuous mode; a poem calligraphed in said orthography; nine pages of letters from *Entmoot*'s lettercol on the tengwar; Earl Evers' poem "Arwen's Song in Gondor"; an article by Ruth Swaycaver entitled "Aragorn: Myth Hero"; Felice Rolfe on Costuming from Tolkien; a certar (runes) mode by Mark Mandel; page-number conversion formulae for the hardcover and paperback editions of Tolkien's works by Ned Brooks; more letters, this time on Middle-earth music; Banks Mebane comparing the hardcover and paperback editions of *LotR* as regards content and errors; "The Passing of Elven-Kind," a song written in the *ann-themath* mode by Ted Johnstone; and finally, several more pages of letters from the readers.

The artwork throughout the issue is sparse and not of spectacular quality, although the front and back covers are rather nice — the front, of Bilbo taking Smag in the jewel-filled mountain Erebor, and the backcover a ship at sunset. Altogether it's an extremely interesting fanzine, coming as it does out of the pre-paperback boom era of Tolkien fandom, and all of the material is still quite relevant and intriguing. I am occasionally annoyed/amused when fans write articles and discuss ideas which have been covered already in old fanzines; unfortunately, however, many of these publications are now out-of-print or extremely rare. I am very pleased that Greg Shaw has gone ahead and reprinted the best material from *Entmoot* — he has contributed considerably to the study of Tolkieniana; now it's up to Tolkien fans to pick up on his efforts, and not let all this rich material fade into obscurity.

The *Wootton Major Journal* is an odd little beast that appears to be on the road to becoming a quite successful fantasy fanzine. Although it began rather weakly, I thought, with fanish science fiction and poor artwork, editor Steve Armstrong is increasing the quality and scope of the material with each issue. The first *WMJ* contained the first part of a humorous (?) sf short story and an article on the Anthem of Gondor, of interest to Tolkien fans. Number Two brings us such items as strange recipes, the conclusion to that short story, reviews, "A Critical Analysis of Lord Dunsany," another short sf story, a suggested mode for the tengwar (going back to Latin's phonemic system), maps of Middle-earth, Narnia & Prydain, and "a boring and meaningless paper" on time travel.

The third issue (Spring 1970) is a great improvement over the preceding two. It contains: a piece clarifying some points concerning Middle-earth geography; a comparison of Lewis' *Oyeresu* with Roman deities; a discussion of "Who is the most interesting character in the *Iliad*?" a number of Tolkien's songs set to music by Liz Lane; another fantasy short story; the listing of a number of works of music which Armstrong has set to various parts of *LotR*; an article on the theological history of Middle-earth; speculations on the possibility of time travel; an examination of the certar; and letters. In almost thirty pages there are only four or five illustrations, and the quality is still only mediocre. However the material is quickly becoming more sensitive to other works of literature and to the World in general — I'm almost tempted to call *WMJ* a "mini-*Mythlore*," except its range of subject-matter is broader than this magazine's, venturing into science, science fiction, the classics, and other areas besides just the fantasy genre. What the *Wootton Major Journal* seems to be lacking is the depth of the material that appears in the leading fanzines today. *WMJ* is still only an average quality fanzine, but is worth keeping an eye on for future developments.

Tournaments Illuminated, now, is something else entirely, though it is still of interest to the fantasy fan. Published in Berkeley by the Society

for Creative Anachronism, it contains material on constructing authentic medieval costumery, chain-mail, weapons for use on the field of honor (the SCA holds several tourneys throughout the year at which the fighting men go into combat for their respective causes and reputations); also instructions for basic swordsmanship, a lesson on how to address lords and ladies of various levels in the medieval social and political hierarchy, child care, loom construction, the art of falconry, chess, and heraldry. Other regular features include reviews of books pertaining to the subject of medieval living, articles on ancient poetry, and letters from the readers. TI is in a sense a Whole Earth Catalog of the medieval era — it's one of the most functional fanzines around; its purpose is quickly defined and carried out with skill, wit, and distinctive flair.

Tournaments Illuminated doesn't carry articles on fantasy literature; it contains material examining the subject of many of those fantasy works. It brings the whole world of knights and damsels and kings and queens into the present, it presents it all as a still-viable way of life, and on first glance appears to be much more exciting and rewarding an experience than the reading of a book: I mean, instead of leafing wistfully through Morte d'Arthur we can live that universe, we can make it all a reality. However, eventually one learns that one life is really much the same as any other; that one of the main attractions of the period before 1650 (the time covered by the SCA) is in its contrast with 20th Century U.S.A. Had we lived in the Middle Ages, very probably we would be the people to revive an even older culture. I imagine a majority of Anachronists do still consume vast amounts of fantasy literature — it's all just a part of the general fantasist 'mentality,' and really there is much more to the fantasy genre than escape on a simple level.

The artwork in TI is in general quite good, augmented by occasional use of color mimeography, be it in aesthetic quality (Diana Paxson DeColes is art editrix and does most of the work) or graphic clarity in illustrations for articles on sewing, weaponry or the fighting arts.

BEST OF ENTMOOT (Greg Shaw, 64 Taylor Dr., Fairfax CA 94930)

Colour mimeo, 43pp. Inquire of price.

WOOTTON MAJOR JOURNAL (Steve Armstrong, Rt. 5, Box 1424, Phoenix AZ 85009) Lithograph, #3/29pp. Inquire of price.

TOURNAMENTS ILLUMINATED (c/o The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., 2815 Forest Ave., Berkeley CA 94705) Mimeo, #15/63pp. \$3.00 per year, 50¢ per copy.



TO MICHAL: SONNETS AFTER MARRIAGE

I

This you shall owe me — that your soul shall keep
Its bravery of childishness unmarred:
Awake, in love's protection; and asleep,
By not so much as dreams of treachery scarred.

Falls, or a thistle-spike or a bee's sting,
Quarrels, and such afflictions of our dust
Shall pierce you; but no too-quick withering
Shall age you in this heart that holds your trust.

Here shall your young eyes weep away their woe,
Your childish angers here shall have their way,
Here your intent simplicity shall show
The labours it rejoices to display,

And here shall beat unharmed, in storms of glee,
Your joyous and impetuous infancy.

II

And so it shall be, when you come to die,
And that strange guest, for whom no watchdogs bark,
Talks downstairs with our elders, though you cry
At going out from me into the dark, —

When you must leave the attic where we play, —
This wide clear room that on the garden looks, —
Where we have loved each other all the day
And had our games, our picnics, and our books, —

When some old voice — which long ago was known,
Telling our names, some pleasant voice and mild,
And bidding us be friends -- shall call you down,
Then most of all shall you be found a child,

Shrink, cloy, yet bravely (by what longings sped)
Climb slowly down those last dark stairs to bed.

—Charles Williams

((from Windows of Night (1942). Published seven years after Williams' marriage to Florence Conway, renamed by her husband, Michal, after the Biblical wife of David. —G. E. Sadler))



CHARLES WILLIAMS

a short reading list

HIS FICTION:

All Hallows' Eve. Avon Books, New York.
Descent into Hell. Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich.
The Greater Trumps. Avon.
Many Dimensions. Eerdmans.
The Place of the Lion. Eerdmans.
Shadows of Ecstasy. Eerdmans.
War in Heaven. Eerdmans.

HIS POETRY:

Arthurian Torso (containing "The Figure of Arthur" by Williams, and "Williams and the Arthuriad" by C.S. Lewis). Oxford University Press, London.
The Region of the Summer Stars. Oxford.
Taliessin through Logres. Oxford.

HIS DRAMA:

Collected Plays. Oxford.

HIS ESSAYS:

The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Eerdmans.
The English Poetic Mind. Russell and Russell, New York.
The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante. Noonday, New York.
He Came Down from Heaven and The Forgiveness of Sins. Faber and Faber, London.
Witchcraft. Meridian Books, New York.

ANTHOLOGY:

Selected Writings, ed. Anne Ridler. Oxford.

ABOUT HIM:

Fuller, Edmund. Books with Men behind Them. Random House, New York.
Hadfield, Alice Mary. An Introduction to Charles Williams. Robert Hale Limited, London.
Shideler, Mary McDermott. Charles Williams. Eerdmans.
Shideler, Mary McDermott. The Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams. Eerdmans.

