Artists' Comments

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Front Cover: “At Home”  
by Bonnie Callahan

The cover is a portrait of J.R.R. Tolkien as he might have appeared at the time he was beginning to write The Lord of the Rings. It has been reinvented from a photograph in The Tolkien Family Album. The technique of painting is adapted from classic Disney Studio film styling, and to prove that the sublime truly can be culled from the ridiculous, the paint is “Cel Vinyl,” used in film and television animation work, some of the colors used being “Dy-no-Mutt Yellow,” “Utility Floor,” and “Mud Grey.” The paint has been applied as washes to illustration board gently misted with water by airbrush, about ten to twenty layers have to be built up with painstaking care, plus delicate manipulation with various brushes.

Back Cover: “Manwë”  
by Patrick Wynne

When Glen asked me to do a color illustration for the Centenary issue of Mythlore I gladly accepted, since Eru knows I need the practice. Even though I've begun doing color work professionally — Sir Gibbie (Multnomah) has now hit the bookstores, and Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates (ditto) will be following later on in the year — I'm not yet comfortable with color, and this illustration of Manwë is probably not going to make Ted Nasmith lose any sleep. It's most definitely a mixed media piece, using felt-tip markers, colored pencils, India ink, and custom-mixed colored inks in various layers and combinations — whatever got the job done.

The design itself is not new, closely following an ink sketch I did in 1989 for a planned illuminated version of my Quenya translation of Chapter 8 of The Silmarillion, “The Darkening of Valinor.” As for Manwë's rather grim expression, the illustration shows the moment at which he learns that Melkor has hotfooted it from Valinor, apparently actually headed south to have a nice little chat with Ungoliant. I also had in mind the description of Manwë given in “Of the Beginning of Days”: “His raiment is blue, and blue is the fire of his eyes, and his sceptre is of sapphire, which the Noldor wrought for him.” The same passage, the illustration shows the moment at which he learns that Melkor has hotfooted it from Valinor, apparently making a break for his old haunts in the north of Middle-earth (of course we, the readers, know that Melkor is actually headed south to have a nice little chat with Ungoliant). I also had in mind the description of Manwë given in “Of the Beginning of Days”: “His raiment is blue, and blue is the fire of his eyes, and his sceptre is of sapphire, which the Noldor wrought for him.” The same passage says that Manwë loved the Vanyar best of all the Elves, “and of him they received song and poetry; for poetry is the delight of Manwë, and the song of words is his music,” which led me to include a pair of Vanyar harpists at Manwë's feet, plucking away in blissful ignorance of the great events moving about them. Some may quibble with red draperies on the throne, but from a purely artistic standpoint the design needed a dollop of warm red to offset the cool blues and greens.

The style owes much to that of Celtic and medieval manu-

scripts (so what else is new?) and was particularly influenced by traditional portrayals of the evangelist St. John, who was usually shown accompanied by his symbol of the eagle, representing the soaring spirituality of his Gospel. The figures (and the harps) were also strongly influenced by the work of my favorite Pre-Raphaelite painter Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

Center Fold: “Namárië”  
by Paula DiSante

Almost immediately after Glen asked me to have a crack at the center spread for this special issue, I knew what I wanted to do. Although long ago I intended to execute this scene in pencil, I knew that if I didn't switch to acrylic paint, I'd still be sketching in strands of the characters' hair well into December — of next year! So I dug the old brushes out of the closet....

Namárië (Farewell) is, I think, an appropriate title for this work. The Keepers of the Three Rings, along with the Bearers of the One, are leaving Arda forever. As Middle-earth slips away, the characters look back at it, each in a slightly different direction, some with heads a little tilted in contemplation, wrapped in their own thoughts and memories. Galadriel has what I dub “The Thousand-Year Stare” as she recalls the ages now past which saw unnumbered triumphs and tragedies (sort of a Greta Garbo/Queen Christina thing...). Elrond's face reflects the very real and immediate grief of leaving behind all of his beloved children, whom, as far as he knows, he will never see again.

Gandalf allows himself a slightly mysterious smile of self-satisfaction for a job well done. As Aragorn said: “He has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory.” Bilbo, too, has his own satisfaction, and smiles at many old remembrances. In his time, he did all that anyone could ask of him, and was able to pass on the Ring to the next bearer. Frodo endures the same kind of pain Elrond feels. He holds aloft the starglass, anxious that his dear friends on the shore have from him this last glimmering sign of hope.

The inspiration for this piece comes, strangely enough, as much from a passage in The Silmarillion as the one in The Lord of the Rings:

In that time the last of the Noldor set sail from the Havens and left Middle-earth for ever. And latest of all the Keepers of the Three Rings rode to the Sea, and Master Elrond took there the ship that Cirdan had made ready. In the twilight of autumn it sailed out of Mithlond, until the seas of the Bent World fell away beneath it, and the winds of the round sky troubled it no more, and borne upon the high airs above the mists of the world it passed into the Ancient West, and an end was come for the Eldar of story and of song.

The curve of the Earth in the background is symbolic of (Continued on page 53)
of the genre for the power of his imagination, for his ability
to create beautiful, wholly realized worlds, and for the
moral commitment which supplies tension in his stories.

Lawler, on the other hand, is little concerned that
Tolkien did not write "science fiction," except to note that
some have put The Lord of the Rings in that category. He
writes at length on The Hobbit, especially the development
of Bilbo as "correlative to the experience of growing up"
(p. 799), but remarks only very briefly on its sequel. He
deals primarily and enthusiastically with The Silmarillion,
its basis in language, and Tolkien's genius therein. That
work, and The Lord of the Rings, are not merely great
fantasy, but great literature. "There is little doubt that
Tolkien will eventually take his place somewhere in the
neo-romantic movement which followed the aestheticism
and decadence of the late 19th century" (p. 800). He is
already seen in the tradition of H. Rider Haggard and
William Morris, and of the early sagas and romances. The
influence of the Inklings must also be considered, and
some may explore Tolkien's relation or parallels to con-
temporary writers of fantasy such as Mervyn Peake and
Austin Tappan Wright. But in the end, Lawler believes
(without further comment), it may be that Tolkien will be
understood best when compared to James Joyce. [WGH]

Vanhecke, Johan. "Aspects of Christ in Gandalf."
Lembas Extra. [Leiden]: Tolkien Genootschap "Unquendor,"
1991, 63-75.

The presents given to Christ at birth are echoed in
Cirdan's gift to Gandalf of the ring Narya, and John the
Baptist (who recognized the Messiah) in Cirdan (who saw
Gandalf's purpose in Middle-earth). Gandalf's an-
nouncement to Aragorn of the end of the Third Age paral-
lels Christ leaving his realm to Peter.

Vanhecke also observes that the choice of the Istari in
Unfinished Tales is related to the Parliament of Heaven
allegory in medieval mystery plays. [WGH]

Woolsey, Daniel P. "The Realm of Fairy Story:
J.R.R. Tolkien and Robin McKinley's Beauty."
Children's Literature in Education 22.2 (1991): 129-35. [Lewis
131-32, 134]

The ideas expressed by Tolkien in "On Fairy-Stories," here
liberally quoted, are the foundation of Woolsey's appreciation
of Robin McKinley's retelling of "Beauty and the Beast," a
"good fairy story" by Tolkien's definition. [WGH]

ERRATUUM OF 'TALES NEWLY TOLD' IN THE
last issue, issue 68, page 10, column two, the end
of the paragraph should read:

Harry's Turtledove's "The Decoy Duck" is set in the universe
of his "Vidcessos" books, exemplifying the world-building
genre of fantasy which, in its most intricate and intellectually
demanding form, was certainly instituted by Tolkien. Peter
S. Beagle's "The Naga" is feigned to be a lost chapter from
Pliny the Elder's Historia Naturalis, echoing Tolkien's device
of giving his works sources in supposed ancient manuscripts.

Apologies for the previous omission of the words in bold type.