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Religion and Romanticism in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*

Abstract

Deplores lack of critical attention to *The Neverending Story*, which she reads as “a profoundly religious text” which includes both spiritual and psychological growth.

Additional Keywords

Ende, Michael. *The Neverending Story*; Ende, Michael. *The Neverending Story*—Literary theory in; Ende, Michael. *The Neverending Story*—Religious aspects; Ende, Michael. *The Neverending Story*—Romanticism in

Religion and Romanticism

in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*

Kath Filmer

... Romantic poetry works by means of symbols rather than analogies or allegories because it is concerned to change the way the reader experiences life.

Stephen Prickett, *Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth*, 15.

Michael Ende's intricate fantasy novel *The Neverending Story* is, according to the cover blurb, an international best-seller. But despite its translation from German into English and its access to the lucrative American market, and following that its adaptation into a film of the same name, the novel has slipped quietly from critical notice. This oversight is lamentable, because the book has a great deal of value to offer not only to young readers at whom it was ostensibly aimed, but to adults as well. In particular, it offers some insights into the complex worlds of the imagination and of the human psyche, and addresses whether consciously or not some of the concerns of contemporary literary theory.

The Neverending Story is, above all, a profoundly religious text, although there is not a word in it that is specifically religious, and in it there are unmistakable elements of skepticism. But through this text, the author's priestly role can be seen quite clearly, and the problematics of fantasy are dealt with in a context which includes spiritual, as well as psychological, growth. This is no mere fairy tale, though it invokes the whole fairy story tradition. It is a work of the Romantic Imagination, and its purpose is, as Stephen Prickett has noted in the epigraph to this paper, "to change the way the reader experiences life" (15). In other words, it offers a lived Dialectic of Desire as Bastian Balthazar Bux pursues his ambitions and daydreams through the wonders of Fantastica, the world of fantasy and imagination. And as C.S. Lewis has written in another context, "The dialectic of Desire, faithfully followed, would retrieve all mistakes, head you off from all false paths, and force you not to propound, but to live through, a sort of ontological proof." Lewis was writing of his own experiences of the strongly nostalgic emotion of *Sehnsucht*, the desire for something which can hardly be identified, but which

pierces us like a rapier at the small of a bonfire, the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the title of *The Well at the World's End*, the opening lines of *Kubla Khan*, the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves..." (10).

This same longing is generated for Michael Ende's character Bastian by the experience of reading, indeed by the physical object of a book itself:

"I wonder," he said to himself, "what's in a book while it's closed. Oh, I know it's full of letters printed on paper, but all the same, something must be happening, because as soon as I open it, there's a whole story with people I don't know yet and all kinds of adventures and deeds and battles. And sometimes there are storms at sea, or it takes you to strange cities and countries. All those things are somehow shut up in a book. Of course, you have to read it to find out. But it's already there, that's the funny thing. I just wish I knew how it could be." (11)

There is in this passage an undoubted ontological impetus: a world has been created and is waiting for the reader to enter it. As Tolkien has written in his essay "On Fairy Stories," the reader must enter and engage with this secondary world and with its special laws (Tolkien 48). But Ende's text is polysemous; there is a fantasy within a fantasy. There is the primary tale of the small boy Bastian with which the reader engages, and there is the story of Fantastica into which Bastian himself is drawn. The self-reflexivity of the tale makes it highly meta-narratological. The alternation of red and green typeface (in the original versions, both German and English) also emphasizes the metanarrative technique. This might be seen as an attempt to undermine the operation of the imaginative process, since there is a deliberate return to the fictional version of the real world and the notion of readerly engagement with a text.

But this, of course, is not the whole story. The role of Bastian in the metafictional world parallels the role of the reader in the act of reading any text. Readers must construct the text, as modern theorists would have it; the author is a "dead" and meaning resides only in the subjective engagement of the reader with the signifying constructs which comprise the text. Certainly Bastian constructs the text; but the text in this novel is much more than merely words on paper, as Bastian is well aware. The text is a world, and the act of constructing the text is the act of creating a world, which is precisely the role Bastian is given in the world of Fantastica. Moreover, he is constantly referred to as a Savior by the inhabitants of Fantastica, which emphasizes his creative and godlike function, although this *deus ex machina* from the mundane world is a flawed saviour whose endeavors are not always either well-intentioned or beneficent in their effects.

This is, to a very great degree, a *Bildungsroman* in the style of Hoban's *Ridley Walker*, tracing as it does the moral and psychological development of one key character, from whose point of view the narrative is related. Though not told in the first person (indeed it cannot be told in the first

person, since at one point Bastian loses his memory completely) there is no doubt about its focus. And like Riddley Walker and Tolkien's Frodo, like C.S. Lewis' Jane and Mark Studdock in *That Hideous Strength*, and Orwell's Winston Smith, Bastian is an Everyperson, a very ordinary, unprepossessing, and decidedly unremarkable small boy, rather plump and neither very selfless nor very courageous. His main claims to readerly sympathy arise from his sadness at his mother's death and the way he has been excluded from his father's affections by the parent's preoccupations with his own grief, and, of course, there is something appealing in Bastian's abiding love for books.

This sympathy is eroded a trifle in Bastian's act of removing the book from Mr. Coreander's shop in the opening episodes; but this is balanced almost immediately by the boy's remorse and by the way he later takes responsibility for his deed at the end of the book. It turns out that, after all, the book was his story and meant specially for him. These mitigating circumstances are not divulged until the end, because it is necessary that Bastian is not seen as an altogether likeable character at the beginning. All the errors he makes in Fantastica arise out of his own psyche, although he does not realize it; he must discover himself in order to make the right sort of wish, so that he can complete his dual quest. For not only must Bastian restore the world of the Imagination, but he must allow the Imagination to heal the real world.

In many respects, this novel has resonances of and intertextual relationships with the literature of Romanticism in its various manifestations. There are certainly some Coleridgean overtones, especially in the notion of perception and creativity. The world of Fantastica is one in which there can be no new creation; rather what happens is that elements of the Fantastical world are dissolved, dissipated and diffused, and recombined into different forms. For true creativity to be manifested in Fantastica, human intervention is needed: Bastian's role as saviour is that also of creator. When he returns to the real world, he comes also as a saviour, bringing the Water of Life to his emotionally imprisoned father. And in giving his father the ability to see life afresh, and to experience joy and beauty once again, Bastian exercises his abilities to create and to heal. When the roles are transferred from the fantasy world to the real world, they are contracted from the universal to the particular, another point which may be seen as religious: divine intervention, performed through individual humans, may affect either the whole world, or one individual only. In Bastian, through the operation of the Imagination, we have "Eternity contracted to a span... Infinity in a grain of sand."

In the treatment of Infinity or of neverendingness, there is a resemblance in this text to the *Alice* books and to Hoban's *The Mouse and his Child*. Here, however, Infinity can be contemplated by the endless retelling of the tale, which, without input from the human imagination, is destined to be endlessly repeated, a neverending story. A

neverending story sounds like a great idea to the avid reader; the title of the book in Mr Coreander's shop attracts Bastian, who always feels sad when he finishes reading a much-loved tale. But as with every other imaginative element in the novel, neverendingness can be both good and evil. And the neverendingness of the story before the coming of Bastian has about it the quality of despair, a kind of dull and onerous literary treadmill from which only the human imagination can provide escape.

There is an interesting treatment of the concepts of good and evil in this book. In Fantastica, the Childlike Empress regards good and evil characters alike. All are creations of the human imagination. As Tolkien writes in his poem *Mythopoeia* :

Though all the crannies of the world we filled with Elves
and Goblins, though we dared to build Gods and their
houses out of dark and light, and sowed the seed of
dragons — 'twas our right (used or misused). (Tolkien 49)

The human imagination has access to both dark and light; in the worlds of fantasy there are good and evil characters who are equally important to the story. Quests would not appeal were there not monsters to be overcome and evil creatures to outwit; they are all part of the story. In Fantastica, then, the evil characters are as valuable as the good ones, since they arise out of the same creative human faculty. The human Imagination is a dualistic faculty, and human creators are dualistic gods since they are, as Tolkien suggests in his poem, lords in rags — fallen creatures. Although Ende does not articulate this point explicitly, it is implicit in the value he places upon the evil characters in his fantastic world — a world which clearly comprises all the realms of human imagination: myth, fantasy, legend, story, parable, allegory and *märchen*. The real evil in Fantastica, the terrifying threat to the world of the imagination, is the Nothing, the sense of absence and loss which pervades the story until Bastian can enter the fictional realm. And it is the idea of the Nothing which comes closest in this novel to commentary upon recent theoretical trends in literature.

It is very difficult to describe the Nothing. It is, in this novel, utter absence — not pain, nor loss, but mere absence. The word, as used in the context of Ende's novel, does not mean merely unknowable or indescribable as it sometimes does in literature for children. For example, in the very old Walt Disney cartoon, *Dumbo the Elephant*, a bat looks at the elephant's big ears and sings rather insultingly, "At least 'a bat is something/ A silly and a dumb thing/ But you're nothing but a nothing..." Dumbo, however, is something. Michael Ende's Nothing is nothing, as the will-o'-the-wisp tries to explain:

"Something has happened in Moldymoor ... something impossible to understand. Actually, it's still happening. It's hard to describe — the way it began was — well, in the east of our country there's a lake — that is, there was a lake — Lake Foamingbroth we called it. Well, the way it began was like this. One day Lake Foamingbroth wasn't there anymore — it was gone. See?"

"You mean it dried up?" Gluckuk inquired.

"No," said the will-o'-the-wisp. "Then there'd be a dried-up lake. But there isn't. Where the lake used to be there's nothing — absolutely nothing. Now do you see?"

"A hole?" the rock chewer grunted.

"No, not a hole," said the will-o'-the-wisp despairingly.

"A hole, after all, is something. This is nothing at all." (19)

This notion of non-presence is very close to the Derridean concept of endless deferrals, by which contextual meaning can never be established because no contextual environment can ever supply the terminus of significance. In other words, for Derridean deconstructors, referential meaning is never achieved (Nuttall 24). Any notion of Presence only serves deconstructors for an emptiness which readers desire to fill; it is a supplement, something added to rectify a lack or deficiency — a nothing. Ultimately and essentially, Derridean deconstruction consists of showing that the whole edifice of Western metaphysics rests on the possibility of compensating for a primordial nonpresence by way of supplement (Harari 34). As A.D. Nuttall makes clear, what is involved in programmatic deconstruction of this kind is the dissolution of self, of experience and of meanings (36) which provide termini for literary symbols. Moreover, Nuttall points out, the text itself is seen to be

henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some constant enclosed in a book or its margins, but in a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. (*loc.cit.*)

Is Michael Ende, constructing his neverending story, playing deconstructive games? Certainly, the story is circular until Bastian is drawn into the world of Fantastica. Once there, Bastian begins to deconstruct his own self, since with every magic wish conferred on him by the magical amulet he loses part of his memory, and part of his own cognition of himself. But if this is deconstruction, it is not very convincing, since Ende rehabilitates Bastian and sends him back to the real world, where there is real hope for the future in Bastian's demonstration of maturity and wisdom, and in his father's realization that there is, indeed, something to live for in caring for his son.

Ende effectively undermines the deconstructive impetus he so carefully builds in to his novel, and it is very plain from the context of the nothing and its effect on the world of the Imagination that this text is counter-deconstructive. That is not to say that it is without elements of skepticism. They abound; but they, too, are part of the Imaginative world. There is no god in the world of Fantastica, but logically there cannot be. For the god of secondary worlds is a secondary god — that is, the author/creator. This is the Coleridgean notion of the Secondary Imagination at work, and Tolkien's extrapolation from Coleridgean theory of the notion of sub-creation. And as David Jasper has succinctly pointed out, Coleridge's theory of the Imagination is not merely a theory of aesthetics, but deeply theological:

It is, however, through objects — whether palace domes, albatrosses or embers in the grate — in their symbolic role of particulars which enunciate the whole, that the imagination works by drawing upon the 'inward experience' of man made as a creative soul in God's image. (Jasper 79)

It is not surprising that echoes of Coleridge should be manifested in the work of a twentieth-century German fantasist, since Coleridge's own thinking was profoundly influenced by German thinkers such as Friedrich Schlegel and his brother, A.W. Schlegel, Novalis, Kant, and Schelling (Jasper 8-19). And Jasper remarks in the context of his discussion on Coleridge that "The poet's task is a religious one. Poetic inspiration lays upon him the prophetic burden of mediating divine revelations to mankind" (19). This is precisely the calling of the writer of fantasy, the role of the priest/prophet who articulates hope to an increasingly despairing humankind, and in particular to those contemporary critics who accept the necessity for subversion and undermining certain elements of meaning within texts, but who seek deliverance from the all-devouring Nothing of extremist nihilistic deconstruction. Ende, I believe, is one of the latter, at least as far as this novel is concerned.

The remedy for the encroaching Nothing is for a human to venture into Fantastica in order to give the Childlike Empress a new name. This element of the complex plot permits a limited discussion of the language of the novel. I have avoided commenting in detail upon this basic element of the book because I am using a translation. A scholar much more learned in German than I, with access to the original text, is obviously better qualified to discuss the linguistic aspects of the novel. But the notion of naming is something that this book has in common with Tolkien and Le Guin, where names not only embody identity (as with the true names of the Ents and the mystical potency of true names in Earthsea) but also are the sources of empowering, not only of the possessor of the name, but also of those who know and use it.

The Childlike Empress is not, we are told, an ordinary inhabitant of Fantastica. She is ageless, and although she bears the title empress she does not exert any rule over her dominions. She symbolizes, perhaps, the realm of the subconscious mind, where archetypal images and shapes are manifested and from which the Imagination springs. And naming is surely an exercise of the imagination, even in such a pragmatic endeavor as naming a child; for even in the mundane world names have very strong connotative and associative meanings. In the English school stories which were so popular this century up until the nineteen sixties, the wicked female prefects were invariably called Sybil, Vera or Gertrude; the heroic Fourth Formers who saved the school rejoiced in such names as Pat, Judy, or Christine. The same device was featured in boys' school stories, with the plotters having either foreign names, or being called Silvester or Cyril, while the courageous lads of the Lower Fourth had names such as Michael, Terry and David. These names, even in pseudo-realistic school

stories, were almost generic in operation; once a character appeared with a name drawn from any of these sets (my list is hardly exhaustive) there were set up immediately for the reader generic expectations of some kind of moral attitude. Bastian names the Childlike Empress Moon Child, a name laden with connotations of softness, light, gentleness and beauty. But a Moon Child is a creature as much of shadow as of light, so that the dualistic aspects of Fantastica are embodied in the Empress.

In the two snakes which appear on the cover of Bastian's book, and which make up the magical amulet "AURYN," the same duality appears: one snake is black, the other white. Although the design is rather different from the Taoist Yin/Yang symbol, the two snakes are meant, I believe, to represent, at least to some extent, the same kind of world view. After all, the good arises from the bad; for the encroachment of the Nothing comes the new name for the Childlike Empress; and Bastian's magic in Fantastica, though occasionally well-intentioned, upsets a certain "balance in the elements of the imaginary world. Ende is rather more skilful at concealing his message than Le Guin, whose Earthsea is highly didactic; Ende conveys something of the same message, but it is not easy to detect what his own Weltanschauung actually is. And perhaps that is why his fantasy is so compelling; but it might also account for the fact that *The Neverending Story* has not become a cultic work in the same way as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Earthsea Trilogy*. For although these two works can be perceived, as this study shows, as highly skeptical works, they appear, at least superficially, to be offering certainties. Ende, on the other hand, seems to be offering uncertainties, at least in the context of the Fantastical world; and yet the hope he articulates lies in the operation of the Imagination — a faculty which is for him as for Coleridge, profoundly theological. Bastian's adventures in Fantastica demonstrate this point very well.

As Bastian wishes Fantastica back into being, his own personality diminishes and his memories of the real world fade. Bastian becomes arrogant and self-deluded, since he cannot be made aware of the fact that he has forgotten details of the past; for him, in the moment of forgetting, there never was a past. While Bastian's personality fades, however, the personalities of Atreyu, the boy hero from the lands of the Grass Oceans whose exploits formed the story which drew Bastian into Fantastica to rename the Childlike Empress, and of Xayide, the enchantress who lures Bastian and his party to the castle built like a Seeing Hand, are more acutely realized. In Atreyu and Xayide Bastian confronts Jungian images of himself, his own light and dark side, respectively the *animus* and the *anima* of Jungian psychology, the male and female elements within himself. These must be confronted for an individual to become whole; and perhaps it is not so surprising that Bastian is drawn to the evil Xayide, accepting her flatteries and refusing to see that her purposes are entirely manipulative and self-serving. Eventually, however, Bastian begins to realize his predicament: when imagination robs

someone of an appreciation for the real world, it becomes mere fancy, or worse, a lie. After further adventures, Bastian meets Dame Eyola, who nurtures him in the allegorically-named House of Change.

If Xayide is the image of the dark anima, Dame Eyola is the contrasting figure of the nurturing, healing anima. She is very close to the Grandmother figures of George MacDonald's children's books with her kindness and in the way she offers gentle moral guidance. With the fruit which grows out of her body, she feeds Bastian; she is here the benevolent Mother Nature, a point she makes clear when Bastian expresses his embarrassment at eating the fruit she takes from her hat and her clothes:

"... 'I don't know,'" he said. "Is it all right to eat something that comes out of somebody?"

"Why not?" asked Dame Eyola. "Babies drink milk that comes out of their mothers. There's nothing better." (361)

When Bastian protests further that babies suckle only when they're very little, Dame Eyola merely counters with, "... you'll just have to get to be very little again, my dear boy (361). There are very strong allusions here to the biblical message that unless you become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3). Bastian reverts to a pseudobabyhood under Dame Eyola's care; and is comforted when he tells her about his adventures in Fantastica, especially his betrayal of Atreyu while he was deceived by Xayide. He confesses, I did everything wrong. Dame Eyola explains that the way he has chosen, the way of wishes, is the long way round, but since his destiny is to find the fountain from which springs the Water of Life, every way that leads there is the right one (365).

This is very close to C.S. Lewis' assertion that the dialectic of desire "... would retrieve all mistakes, head you off from all false paths, and force you ... to live through... a sort of ontological proof" (10). Imagery such as that of the Water of Life and the House of Change (which is, as Dame Eyola points out, bigger inside than out [362]) is undoubtedly metaphysical, and very close to Lewis' own imagery in the Narnian Chronicles, especially the Stable in *The Last Battle*, which the Narnians enter as their old world comes to an end outside. Once inside the Stable, Tirian, the Narnian Prince,

...could hardly believe his eyes. There was the blue sky overhead, and grassy country spreading as far as he could see in every direction, and his new friends all round him, laughing.

"It seems, then," said Tirian, smiling himself, "that the Stable seen from within and the Stable seen from without are two different places."

"Yes," said the Lord Digory. "Its inside is bigger than its outside."

"Yes," said Queen Lucy. "In our world too, a Stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world.70 (140-141)

While Lewis' allusions are clear, Ende's are much more obvious. The House of Change has led Bastian to the recognition of a very deep longing within him which was different in every way from all his previous wishes: the longing to be capable of loving (366-67). The parallels between Lewis' world and Ende's are closer than a first glance suggests, since the Stable represents for the Christian Lewis the incarnation of Christ, the embodiment of Love. If the House of Change is reminiscent of the Stable, it comes as no surprise that the need for Love should be made manifest in the little boy who takes refuge within it. Though not overtly Christian, avoiding Lewis' Christian didacticism as skilfully as he avoids Le Guin's insistent Taoist polemic, Ende nevertheless touches on human need, both psychological and spiritual. And for Bastian to learn to love, he must taste the Water of Life, and take some of it back to his own world.

From Dame Eyola's care, Bastian ventures forth again to pursue his final wish. He digs with the old miner, Yor, for Art in the deep underground recesses of Minroud, and after much effort finds a picture of his father, though by this time Bastian has lost his memories of his father and is merely drawn inexplicably to the painting, in which the pictured man is encased in a block of ice. The struggle to mine for pictures has important symbolic implications, one being the Jungian notion of exploring the subconscious, and another being the spiritual value of Art. This last wish has cost Bastian everything: by now he no longer has a name. This is perhaps the bleakest moment of the book; the little boy who took refuge in the school attic with his magical book has had to learn hard lessons through his experience with the world of Fantastica.

That, of course, is part of the value of Fantasy. Derided by some as escapist nonsense, Fantasy offers sometimes uncomfortable and very often quite painful encounters as readers see in metaphorical mirrors, which it is the business of fantasy to construct, images of themselves. Fantasy is a confrontationist literature, and its message is often uncompromisingly harsh. But even at this bleak moment there is an echo of Dame Eyola's promise: Nothing is lost. Everything is transformed (366). Bastian has, however, one more thing to lose: the amulet Auryu, given to him by the Childlike Empress. Almost thwarted in the final stages of his quest by his own foolish creation, the Shlammoofs, Bastian is near despair when he encounters Atreyu and the Luckdragon. The precious picture has been broken, and Bastian's chances of breaking free from the now unbearable fantasies of Fantastica seem very remote. But in one last act of self-surrender, he returns the amulet to Atreyu.

As he does so, the amulet becomes alive, the two snakes encircling a fountain which contains the Water of Life. Bastian farewells his friends, charging Atreyu with the task of finishing all the stories Bastian has left behind, and returns to the real world, to his distraught father who has been searching overnight for his son, and to the business

of living. He tells his story to his father, adding sadly that he has spilled the Water of Life which he had tried so hard to bring back:

It was almost dark in the kitchen. His father sat motionless. Bastian stood up and switched on the light. And then he saw something he had never seen before.

He saw tears in his father's eyes.

And he knew that he had brought him the Water of Life after all. (391)

The Water of Life turns out to be, after all, a story. A story of a little boy's adventures in a fantasy land, adventures that led him back into his father's affections. In those adventures, Bastian has learned courage and faithfulness (or at least, he learns that he already has those qualities, rather like the lion in *The Wizard of Oz*), and most importantly, he learned how to receive and to give love. Stories have the power to influence growth and change in the reader, to touch them emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. In that respect, this story is very much like what Douglas Thorpe sees as Blakean dream of Dorothy in the film world of Oz, where the realm of Fantasy is shown in color against the black and white of mundane reality. Douglas Thorpe sees Dorothy's dream of Oz in a way which might be applied to Bastian's adventures in Fantastica:

Stories such as these begin where Jesus also began: transforming the self by transforming in narrative the way we see ourselves. The story has momentarily reshaped our lives, now it's up to us to live according to that shape.

...The new shape of our lives is not just personal; it is seen as ultimate and so its demand is also ethical. Shelley saw this connection between the imagination, love, morals and politics a century and a half ago... (13-14)

Much of what Thorpe writes about the film version of *The Wizard of Oz* holds true also for *The Neverending Story*. Frank Baum's children's story was written in 1900, in an attempt to bring wonderment and joy to its readers; Michael Ende's novel, written in 1979, has the same purpose in a world even then given to pragmatics, rampant capitalism and technology. As Thorpe writes,

Early in Blake's career he set down the principles that would guide all of his work, concluding (in "There is No Natural Religion") that "God becomes as we are that we might be as He is." Since in Blake "we become what we behold," we must behold God in our fallen world in order to become God. (14)

And to become God, or at least to become what Tolkien would call the Sub-Creator, we must be "born again": Bastian is reborn through the fountain in Fantastica; his father is reborn through his healing tears. For the God of this book is the story-telling God, very close to the God of Brian Wicker's *The Story Shaped World*, where God becomes a character in a book (the Bible) so that humans might better understand not only Him, but also themselves (Wicker 71-106). There is no doubt then, that despite the recurring threat of the Nothing, the stalking of the dark shadow of the Gmork, "the being without a world",

despite the misuse of wishes and the betrayal of friends, the world of Fantastica is a place of healing.

It is a place of escape, of course. But it is an escape into something, not an escape from something. It is an escape into self-discovery, self-surrender, healing and wholeness — and these are things intended not for self-gratification, but to bring back and share with others. Ende draws on many sources for his ultimate message, but it is a message of hope. It fulfills all the potential of the Fantastical Mode of story telling, which, as C.S. Lewis writes, has the power

...to generalize while remaining concrete, to present in palpable form not concepts or even experiences but whole classes of experience, and to throw off irrelevancies. But at its best it can do more; it can give us experiences we have never had and thus, instead of "commenting on life," can add to it. (Lewis 74-75)

The Neverending Story is a profoundly Romantic, profoundly religious story. It is never lost in didacticism, and yet it offers very powerful symbolism for those who are willing to decode it. It does not shrink from skepticism (is there, perhaps, some ironic pun in the negating of the author's name in the title?) but it articulates hope through the act of self-giving. This is a text which, as Stephen Prickett has said of the poetry of the Romantics, encourages readers to "change the way they experience life."

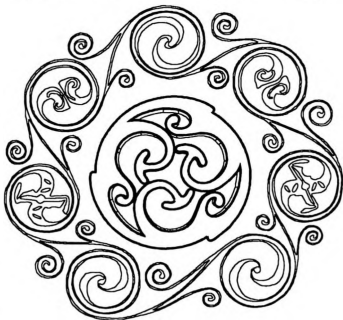
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Art Submissions

Mythlore welcomes the submission of new artists to its pages. Both full page and column pieces are encouraged. Full page art should be 7.25" wide by 9.25" tall — it may actually be larger if it is in proportions. Column art should first be 5" wide by 6" to 8" tall, which can be photographically reduced to fit the printed size of the column. Material inspired by or illustrating the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, or Charles Williams is especially sought, but other mythological and fantasy inspired artwork is also welcome. Write directly to the Art Editor, whose address is found on page 2.



Mythopoeic Celtic Stationery by Patrick Wynne

This stationery features four designs, all found in *Mythlore* 35: The Celtic circles portray themes from J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. Each circle is at the top right of the page and is 3.6" in diameter, with a lined border around the page. The fourth design is of the four corners found on the mailing envelope your *Mythlore* is sent in, but much larger in size. The set includes 4 sheets of each design, making 16 printed sheets, 12 blank sheets, and 16 envelopes. The paper is of neutral but beautifully antique-appearing parchment. Each set makes fine personal stationery for both men and women, and are excellent for that special mythopoeic gift. \$5 per set. Send your order to:

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