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Letters

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Diana Waggoner, Catherine Madsen, Jeffrey Lee Satterfield, Craig Payne, Dainis Bisenieks, and Walter B. Crawford

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**Diana Waggoner**  
Beverly Hills, CA

Just a note to say how much I admired and enjoyed Elizabeth Arthur’s piece on Gollum (“Above All Shadows Rides the Sun: Gollum As Hero”) in Mythlore 67. It is one of the most original, instructive, and perceptive articles on The Lord of the Rings that I have read since I discovered Tolkien thirty years ago, and one of the very best things you have ever published — your general level is high, but this one is really exceptional. Congratulations to Ms. Arthur and to you.

**Catherine Madsen**  
Springfield, MA

Please give Elizabeth Arthur my highest compliments on her paper on Gollum. She’s managed to say what nobody else has said quite right in forty years — that in some crucial way he is the center of the book, and the locus of its complexity.

**Jeffrey Lee Satterfield**  
Bogart, GA

While reading Coralee Grebe’s article “Bashing Joseph Campbell,” I was surprised to see Mortimer J. Adler’s book Truth in Religion missing from her sources and chronology. His book should’ve been first on the list.

Adler, indisputably one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, and possibly the most acute philosopher ever from the United States, addresses a severe deficiency in Campbell’s works, and that’s his basic misunderstanding — and misrepresentation — of Christianity.

Though Adler’s book runs very deep, and his explanation and subsequent dismissal of Campbell as someone qualified to discuss Christianity is like skimming a stone across the top of the waters, his thoughtful confrontations with the Campbell mystique should be required reading for anyone interested in the debate over Campbell’s place in modern thought. Though he gives Campbell some due as a social scientist in cultural anthropology, Adler writes, “But his competence in dealing with philosophical matters, especially in the field of philosophical theology, is highly questionable,” and “Professor Campbell writes as if he were abysmally ignorant of the best in Christian theology or as intentionally inattentive to it.”

**Craig Payne**  
Ottumwa, IA

“Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth” by Owen Jones, which appeared in the Fall 1989 issue of The Intercollegiate Review, is a good article to add to the “Chronology of Pertinent Articles” compiled by Coralee Grebe in “Bashing Joseph Campbell: Is He Now the Hero of a Thousand Spaces?” This article points out Capmbell’s unrelenting misuse of theological and philosophical terminol­o­gy for his own ends, such as the continual use of the word “transcendence” for “immanence.”

By the way, not only was Campbell certainly anti-Semitic, though Grebe attempts to refute these charges, but he was also anti-Christian and in particular anti-Catholic. Grebe maintains that whatever “hurtful attitudes” Campbell may or may not have had, “they have not survived him in his work.” I would recommend watching the videotape series Transformations of Myth Through Time. Grebe desires “concrete examples”; to give one example from many in this series: Campbell recounts a story from the Judeo-Christian Bible before dismissing it with the comment, “What a dreary mythology!”

Campbell’s basic mistake lies in his misunderstanding of the religious concept of the relationship between mythology as divine truth and historical revelation as the divine self-expression of that truth. Of course, to Campbell, any assertion of historical revelation (as in belief in the Incarnation, for instance) frustrates the “transcendent” purpose of myth. But C.S. Lewis put it best, in case we need to be reminded: “As myth transcends thought, Incarnation transcends myth. The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact ... By becoming fact it does not cease to be myth; that is the miracle.”

**Dainis Bisenieks**  
Philadelphia, PA

I suppose Mythlore would be less than it is without its artwork, though any artist should know how audacious it is to try portraying thousand-ship beauty or its masculine counterpart, whether among Men or Elves. Perhaps the best way out is a stylization that does not insist that these people really looked like that. Patrick Wynne’s “German
Important Policy Change regarding the Society Membership Directory

Since the Society has published directories of members, it has been the policy to only publish those who have specifically requested to be included. This is now going to change. In the next directory, all Society members will be published, except those who specifically ask not to be listed. This includes all individual subscribers to Mythlore, unless they have asked for a non-member subscription. If for any reason you do not wish to be listed in the next Membership Directory, please write the The Mythopoeic Society, P.O. Box 6707, Altadena, CA 91003 USA.

Nature as Supernature

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The Chronicles also share with The Faerie Queene the presence of psychological or spiritual journey as a structural principle. Arthagon matures in justice as Covenant ultimately achieves Christ-like love and innocence in spite of his leprosy and his many crimes against the Law when he sacrifices himself under Kiril Threndor. Since he defeats Lord Foul, the externalization of his own dark side, he has worked out in the Land the psychological renewal he could not achieve on his own at Haven Farm. But unlike a Spenserian Knight, he does so unaided by divine grace. For Thomas Covenant, then, the author’s statement in his preface to “Gilden-Fire” (an original part of The Illearth War) is a fitting elegy: “In reality as in dreams, what matters is the answer we find in our hearts to the test of Despair.”

Notes

1. See my earlier article, “The Hero’s Education in Sacrificial Love: Thomas Covenant, Christ-Figure,” Mythlore 54 (1988), 34-38.
2. All biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.
4. See “The Hero’s Education in Sacrificial Love.”
5. Eric S. Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 59. Covenant’s own explanation bears out Rabkin’s point “Culture shock is what happens when you take a man out of his own world and put him down in a place where the assumptions, the — standards of being a person — are so different that he can’t possibly understand them” (I.199). Hurloam’s power to regenerate Covenant’s dead nerves, compared with our own world’s ills, provides an apt illustration: “We have cancer, heart failure, tuberculosis, multiple sclerosis, birth defects, leprosy — we have alcoholism, venereal disease, drug addiction, rape, robbery, murder, child beating, genocide — but he could not bear to utter a catalog of woes that might run on forever” (1.283-84).
6. It is a minor flaw in Donaldson’s tale that the painfully introspective Thomas Covenant does not realize that Vain Law once he puts on the heels of the Staff of Law at Revelstone in Book IV, or after ring fire partly transforms one of his arms into wood.