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### No Exit: The Hero as Victim in Donaldson

#### Abstract

Study of Thomas Covenant as a transformation of the standard fantasy hero, who is not permitted (in Tolkien's words) "the Escape of the prisoner." In his fantasy world Covenant is victim and victimizer, whose eventual "acceptance of his own weakness and evil" allows him to subdue Lord Foul.

#### Additional Keywords

Donaldson, Stephen R.—Characters—Thomas Covenant; Heroism in Stephen R. Donaldson

# No Exit

## The Hero as Victim in Donaldson

Gordon E. Slethaug

And he who wields white wild magic  
 gold  
 is a paradox -  
 for he is everything and nothing,  
 hero and fool,  
 potent, helpless -  
 and with the one word of truth or  
 treachery  
 he will save or damn the Earth  
 because he is mad and sane,  
 cold and passionate,  
 lost and found.<sup>1</sup>

In his essay "On Fairy-Stories" J. R. R. Tolkien counters the typically Freudian slur at escapist fantasy by distinguishing between the "Flight of the Deserter" and the "Escape of the Prisoner."<sup>2</sup> The Deserter is one who cannot cope with the world and so wants to escape, but the prisoner is he who needs a reprieve from diseased vision, the charnel house of life, long enough to recover a fresh, untainted, prelapsarian view. Tolkien, of course, implies that he himself, his fantasy heroes, and his readers are among the escaped prisoners, fleeing from the primary to the secondary worlds for that fresh vision.

It is for this reason of escape - momentarily abandoning the decayed world and recovering fresh vision - that Tolkien's heroes so clearly follow the pattern of the hero as described, for instance, by Lord Raglan in *The Hero*.<sup>3</sup> According to this view, the hero comes of honorable and royal lineage, but he must escape from his home and go to a foreign location where he gains his education and maturity among strangers. Within this formulation, the innocent, noble origins of the hero are essential mainly to establish a kind of hereditary access to heroism, though the hero is seldom able to effect any heroic accomplishments where he is born. His birth place serves mainly as a springboard to admit him to a secondary location, the first having little significant bearing on the second. After trials and contests that test his implicit nobility and manhood, giving him the opportunity to suffer, grow, and prove his heroism, the hero is given suitable rewards and allowed to return to his starting point, although he may have been touched in such a way by the secondary world that he becomes a sort of victim. Consequently, the interpenetration of the home environment, or in fantasy the primary world, into the secondary world is limited. In fact, it has almost become de rigueur within fantasy that the primary, often "real," world will not intrude in any significant sense into the secondary. The charm, coherence, and integrity of the quest

in the secondary world - the very foundation of escape - depends upon the innocent hero's marked superiority to his primary world.

In The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever, Stephen R. Donaldson transforms this view of fantasy based on escape by writing of a diseased man who can neither be cured of his leprosy nor put off his despair as he enters the secondary world. Thomas Covenant is paradoxically the weakest, most culpable of men, subject to the severest limitations of his real world as he is thrust in the role of hero in the secondary world. In the real world, he is the victim of disease, social bigotry, and self-pity. In the secondary world he additionally perceives of himself as the victim of metaphysical sources beyond his control. His refusal to abandon feelings of victimization in order to accept pure responsibility for the well-being of others in the secondary world ultimately turns him into a victimizer, not just a victim. He is both escaping prisoner and deserter in flight. But as victim and victimizer, he comes to realize his essentially human dimension, and it is through an acceptance of his own weakness and evil that he is finally able to transcend them and subdue, but not defeat, Lord Foul. Within this series, the author Donaldson never allows himself the luxury of a complete escape nor does he allow that for hero and reader. It is this refusal to permit escape which gives the Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever its special message, interest, and distinction. It is this quality that separates it from Tolkienesque fantasy. And it is this factor which gives it an especially American cast, in the manner of Hawthorne, Melville, Ellison, and Barth where innocence cripples, leading to despair over the knowledge of pain, suffering, and evil.

Although little is said of Covenant's early life, it is clear that he has not suffered. Once a golden boy - a healthy, creative, and successful novelist, innocent of pain, suffering, and real evil, husband of the beautiful Joan, father to Roger, and owner of a nice home - Covenant's childlike innocence of illness and ignorance of despair do not prepare him for the trauma of painful and certain death. Rather than assisting him in coping with life, innocence cripples him when he is confronted by the larger issues of disease, death, and evil. While such innocence and success have been the essence of his American dream, they are not the pith of the human condition - pain, suffering, and evil combined with struggle, joy, love, and self-sacrifice. His adherence to innocence creates a climate in which frustration,

disbelief, and despair easily grow.

When Covenant is diagnosed as a leper and taken to a leprosarium for treatment, he meets a hermit from the West Virginia mountains who manifests the most tragic consequences of Covenant's leprosy: "His hands were swollen stumps, fingerless lumps of pink, sick meat marked by cracks and ulcerations from which a yellow exudation oozed through the medication" (I.15). Since neither this mountain man nor Thomas has a personal or familial history of leprosy and no exposure to it, the source of and reason for the disease is an absolute mystery, as Hawthorne might put it, the very mystery of iniquity bearing with it guilt and social ostracization. As Donaldson expresses it, "

virtually all societies condemn their lepers to isolation and despair - denounced as criminals and degenerates, as traitors and villains - cast out of the human race because science has failed to unlock the mystery of this affliction" (I.17). Although Covenant seems blameless, his community takes the disease "... as proof of crime or filth or perversion, evidence of God's judgment, as the horrible sign of some psychological or spiritual or moral corruption or guilt" (I.18). Like most other offenders against accepted social values such as Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Covenant finds himself the source of ridicule, the butt of jokes, and the target of prejudicial treatment. After learning of the disease, he is stripped of everything he considers valuable and left only with social retribution and punishment: his disease robs him of his sexual potency, self-confidence, and even his self-respect - when he sees his body rotting and when others shout "Outcast" and "Unclean," then he feels guilt, shame, and betrayal; his wife leaves him, taking his son Roger with her because she fears his illness and wishes to protect the boy against this contagious form of leprosy; his neighbors shun and persecute him, trying to drive him away by putting a razor blade in his food because they irrationally fear the disease; the law turns against him, and he is threatened with suits and legal moves to rezone his farm for industry so that he will have to move (even the police car that hits him suggests the force of the law victimizing him); religious leaders will not tolerate him at their gatherings; and his farm begins to decay, since he can not care for it properly and the neighbors put the torch to the barn and defecate and urinate in his writing studio. Even his creative literary ability wanes; so obsessed is he with disease and so bitter is he toward the world that he can neither accept the blithely optimistic tale he has published nor sit down to write a new novel. Until he accepts his weakness, all he can write is a banal, grotesque poem with the darkness of some lament by one of Edgar Allen Poe's characters:

These are the pale deaths  
which men miscall their lives:  
for all the scents of green things  
growing,  
each breath is but an exhalation of

the grave.

Bodies jerk like puppet corpses,  
and hell walks laughing - (I.10)

In a very real sense leprosy becomes a disease of his flesh and mind, a physical and psychic illness: cursed with a festering, incurable disease without origin or cause, he conceives of the world as a gaping wound, the projection of his own "great raw wound of emptiness" (I.18), governed by a sickly and capricious power of fate. He can not accept it as part of the natural order and so grow despite and because of it. In this respect Covenant is heir to the same legacy of bitterness as other stunned tragic heroes such as Melville's *Pierre* or *Ahab* who have been disastrously disillusioned of their youthful idealism and belief in a benevolent universe.

Betrayed by his body and dead to his family and community, Covenant feels denied any significant freedom of choice except that of life or death, and he consequently considers himself absolved of responsibility to others. He refuses to grow beyond his wish to regain a primal innocence of outlook. Responsible only to himself, he often despairs, but once he makes his existential decision not to be an early victim of death, he narcissistically turns inward, protecting himself by trying to submit to the regimented, therapeutic care that his doctor prescribes for him: "Whichever way you go," advises his doctor, "one fact will remain constant: from now until you die, leprosy is the biggest single fact of your existence. It will control how you live in every particular. From the moment you awaken until the moment you sleep, you will have to give your undivided attention to all the hard corners and sharp edges of life. You can't take vacations from it. You can't try to rest yourself by daydreaming, lapsing. Anything that bruises, bumps, burns, breaks, scrapes, snags, pokes, or weakens you can maim, or even kill you. And thinking about all the kinds of life you can't have can drive you to despair and suicide. I've seen it happen" (I.18).

The doctor means for this advice to serve as a warning and reservoir of strength for Covenant, and in a way it does: he dwells on his disease, daily confronting his condition, disciplining himself to remember his VSE (Visual Surveillance of Extremities), avoiding hazardous circumstances, and maintaining his mental alertness. But at the same time this absorption with the disease allows him to flee from the human community, making him a victim of his own self-consciousness: he resents having to do anything which might take his mind off himself and his disease, whether in the primary or secondary worlds. Retrospectively, in *The Wounded Land*, Covenant explains this state to Linden Avery. He attributes this self-victimization to his self-hate: "The things buried in us are powerful and violent, and they are going to come out. The darkness in us - the destructive side, the side we keep locked up

all our lives - is alive here. Everybody has some self-hate inside. Here it's personified - externalized, the way things happen in dreams" (IV.63).

Because Covenant refuses to accept his victimization and go beyond the resultant narcissism, Hile Troy of the Illerth War despises him. Hile himself has been the victim of a birth defect, his eye sockets "empty, orblless, lacking even lids and lashes" (II.66), but that fact has not made him bitter, resentful, and self-absorbed. Indeed, he is productive on Earth as a member of a military think-tank, and he becomes elated and thankful when, in the secondary world, he is given sight and the opportunity to employ his war-games skill in a meaningful cause: Hile fully accepts his personal impotence and believes that the severance of binding personal, social, and legal ties can actually encourage responsibility. "The only person in life who's free at all," he claims, "is a person who's impotent" (II.128).<sup>4</sup> Only the man free of those restraints can in an Emersonian sense be true to himself, and Hile demonstrates that premise by first sacrificing his life for a victory over Foul's forces at Garroting Deep, and again by encouraging Sunder to kill him, creating the means by which the Law of Life is broken so that Covenant's shade can eventually subdue Foul. But Covenant, given the same opportunity for responsibility, becomes even more distrustful, morose, and introverted, a victim of his own suspicion, mortification of human feeling, and self-loathing that failure to reconcile his innocent preconceptions with a more realistic assessment of the presence of evil.

Covenant's narcissism means that he can no longer distinguish between his own image and the world or between dream and objective reality. Accordingly, he will not admit to the validity of any actions other than his own or any worlds other than the one he is accustomed to inhabit, for to admit to those is to suggest that he is mad, insane, or dreaming - that he has completely abandoned all the recommendations of the doctor and taken a vacation from reality. Although averse when he wakes up the morning after his initial foray to the Land and discovers that his leprosy has disappeared and his wounds healed, he must disbelieve it; to believe otherwise is not only to "deny the reality of his disease," something which in the real world will be fatal, but also to encourage responsibility, something he has given up. So he continues to hold the view of himself as the victim of both leprosy and his own dream.

With an effort that made him grind his teeth, he averred, I'm a leper. I'm dreaming. That's a fact.

He could not bear the alternative. If he were dreaming, he might still be able to save his sanity, survive, endure. But if

the Land were real, actual - ah, then the long anguish of his leprosy was a dream, and he was mad already, beyond hope. (I.118)

Consequently, he will not surrender the view that this world is a mere projection of his unconsciousness or rationalization of "struggle inside me. By hell, I've been a leper so long, I'm starting to think that the way people treat lepers is justified. So I'm becoming my own enemy, my own Despisier . . . Catharsis. Work out the dilemma subconsciously, so that when I wake up I'll be able to cope" (II.159).

So preoccupied with his status as victim is he that if he admits this secondary world to be real, then he believes he will become a prisoner of someone else's dream. Whereas Hile Troy has accidentally been pulled into the Land by means of the mistaken summoning of Attaran Trel-mate who wishes to wreak vengeance on Thomas Covenant, Covenant believes himself summoned by the cave-dweller Dool Rockworm who unwittingly acts for Lord Foul in trying to control the magical, if unpredictable, white gold. When Covenant confronts Dool and Foul on Kevin's Watch, he is met by horrible, blood red flames and fog and the nauseating odor of rotten flesh, deathly decay, and funeral attar, the flames and emblems of Lord Foul, the Despisier, Satansheart, Soulcrusher, Fangthane, Corruption, and Gray Slayer. To be called into the Land, to be doubly victimized by strange foes and evil beings, is absolutely intolerable and calls for a renewed sense of escape back to some ideal.

Equally intolerable is the thought that the ideal force to which he might escape, the positive powers of the Land, may also victimize him. Foul himself first suggests this unsavory alternative: he tells Covenant that he has been called by Foul's own opponent, the Creator, that Covenant is the victim of the positive expectations of the Land (I.35). Consequently, if the Land is real, then Covenant is an expendable pawn, the victim and prize of forces that rage and war against each other and which are extraneous and harmful to the personal interests of Covenant himself. He is the unwitting bull in some hideous, metaphysical bullfight where the picaro is an unidentifiable and unconquerable foe thrusting "dark violence" in his ribs (I.22). He dreams that as the victim of a horrible and unjust God "he danced and wept and made love at the commands of a satirical puppeteer" (I.363), and he envisions himself as the divine victim, a kind of purposeless Christ on the cross. To Covenant's way of thinking, the only means by which he can protect himself from victimization and brutalization is to disavow the heroic role thrust on him by others. He must protect his vertigo, his symbolical fear of heights, his fear of heroic responsibility.

Then, too, if he is so shocked out of innocence by corruption that he can not believe in himself, his society, or in a

system of human, poetic, or divine justice, he will not accept the inherent value of the war for the Land. What might be an ethical dilemma for others who must decide between serving the Land or Foul is not the same for Covenant because he sees his choice as between involvement or non-involvement, commitment or escape. He simply says to Foul, "Forget it" (I,35), and that is his initial attitude to the Land as well. In this respect, his attitude within the two worlds is the same. In the "real" world he wants to escape his disease and return to a prelapsarian state of innocence; in the secondary world where he has a chance to effect the workings of justice, to be an active, if not precisely gallant, hero who can risk his own life to help others, he still wishes to flee. As he notes after denying aid to the Wraiths at Andelain: ". . . he had been deaf, blind, numb. He had been so busy moving ahead, putting madness behind him, that he had ignored the madness toward which the path of his dream tended. This dream wanted him to be a hero, a savior; therefore it seduced him, swept him along - urging him forward so that he would run heedless of himself to risk his life for the sake of Wraiths, the Land, illusion" (I,169).

What he must finally learn is that his wish to retreat to innocence will only cause grief and hardship to others. By refusing involvement within the secondary world he may save his own pained skin, but he jeopardizes the lives of others. When he sees the ur-viles eating the Wraiths at the Celebration of Spring, he refuses to intervene, permitting their destruction, and this same passivity is responsible for bringing down destruction on Soaring Woodhelven. Similarly, when his daughter, the High Lord Elena, fights Kevin's evil shadow, he refuses to help her, thereby becoming indirectly responsible for her death. He must fully learn that his litany of refusals is ultimately more destructive than any error he might make in helping the Land. He must learn what the Lords of the Land know, that passivity or escape must not be confused with pacifism in the quest for peace. Passivity is a failure to take responsibility for anything, whereas pacifism is a gentle way to approach a difficult problem.

Covenant is not, however, only the victim who maintains a detrimental passivity. He himself becomes an active, irresponsible aggressor and victimizer: by basing all his actions on the bitterness of not being able to escape, he condemns others to bear similar burdens. Old Salthart, Foamfollower understands that, despite the most deadly troubles, without trying to help others, and without rising above the tragic through laughter and the creative desire to tell tales, all creatures, especially Covenant, will doom themselves and others to savage unkindness. These softer emotions may be dreams or illusions, but, like the giants of old launching ships and "lost in the labyrinth of a foolish dream" (I,188), Covenant needs to launch himself into these dreams. As his wish to escape reinforces his

isolation, loneliness, and introversion, he grows ever more violent and incapable of maintaining control of himself. When he is offered compassion by Lena, he has grown so used to feelings of victimization and violence that he beats and rapes her, an utterly despicable action whether in the primary or secondary world: here is a hero who breaks the bans of culture and violates the dictates of human decency, one who is not only victim but also victimizer as soon as he enters the Land, so that he has no initial chance to experience the merit of the Oath of Peace:

Do not hurt where holding is enough:  
do not wound where hurting is enough;  
do not maim where wounding is enough;  
and kill not where maiming is enough;  
the greatest warrior is one who does not need to kill (I,280).

Yet, he learns that such acts of hostility carry a heavy price: although he thinks he can defend himself against the darkness with "his own capacity for darkness, his violence, his ability to kill" (I,423), those are the ways of coping that cripple him and bring on the destruction of the Land. As he discovers of the rape, it has innumerable injurious repercussions. The great hurt and resentment in Lena's fiance, Triock, and her parents, Atiaran and Trell, result in Triock's losing his youthful enthusiasm, contentment, and joy so that he learns to hate, eventually trying to kill Covenant and coming under the sway of Foul; in Atiaran's heart becoming a "wilderland" so that she loses her life seeking to gain revenge on Covenant by trying to summon him back to the Land; and in Trell's breaking his Oath of Peace, first in attempting to kill Covenant and later in trying to set fire to Revelstone. This act of rape also makes the people of the Land distrust and resent Covenant, though they generally regard him as a necessary tool in their struggle with Foul. This resentment is especially characterized by Pietten who sees the Rahnyn dying because of the promise Covenant extracts from them to come to Lena once a year, and so he tries to kill Covenant. Covenant's killing him lays still one more crime at his door. By suppressing his feelings, damning his "emotional channels" so that they emerge in acts of violence, and trying to retreat into his innocence, Covenant causes more injury to those who protect and help him than he can ever repair or repay. He continues to commit such crimes until he fully assimilates the implications of his statement to Linden that "Freedom doesn't mean you get to choose what happens to you. But you get to choose how you react to it" (V,87).

The result of Covenant's infliction of harm on others is a mighty sense of shame and guilt, a crippling loss of freedom to act, and a need for mercy. He cannot finally escape the understanding that, for whatever reason of selfpreservation and unwillingness to get involved, he has destroyed the

comfort, hope, freedom, and lives of others. This understanding temporarily undermines his sense of balance after the deaths of the Wraiths and the destruction of Soaring Woodhaven, so that he cannot save Elena in The Illearth War. But it is this blood-guilt that begins to clear the way for him to assist responsibly in The Power That Preserves and the later volumes. It is this sense of guilt which allows Covenant to recognize that he can not escape, that he can never return to innocence, and that he must work toward positive personal and social goals, employing victimization against itself. Of course, he must also understand that guilt may likewise have negative consequences. He knows that Lord Foul wanted him to perceive the fetters of action and consequence which bound him to his guilt, wanted him to blame himself for the destruction of the Staff, and for the Sunbane, and for every life the Clave sacrificed" (IV, 362). He also sees the destructive effects of guilt on others when in The Wounded Land he experiences the negative religiosity of Joan who tries to atone for having divorced him, or the loveless duty of Linden Avery who works out her own sense of guilt over the death of her parents. Still, guilt is a crucial stage in his growth from narcissism into social responsibility.

One of the first to see guilt as a potentially constructive factor in Covenant's development is Lord Mhoram who tells Hile Troy that the burden of Covenant's "crime hurts him. I believe he will seek atonement at the High Lord's [Elena's] side" (II, 322). Covenant, of course, does not seek atonement at the side of Elena, but he does later accept Mhoram's position when Mhoram himself is High Lord, especially as a result of Elena's continuing love, Trick's "own harsh sense of mercy," and Saltheart's friendship. Because of their enduring affection, he comes to feel a need for atonement and pride in a growing sense of usefulness. Consequently, The Illearth War begins on a slightly positive note, softened by Covenant's satisfaction at helping stem Foul's drive for power, and The Power That Preserves opens on a substantial note of heroic commitment. He even volunteers to enter the Land after he has helped save the girl from snake poisoning. In The Wounded Land Dr. Berenford speaks frankly to Linden about Covenant's discussion of the positive effects of guilt in his novel: "If you had a chance to read Or I Will Sell My Soul for Guilt, you'd find him arguing that guilt is power. All effective people are guilty because the use of power is guilt, and only guilty people can be effective. Effective for good, mind you. Only the damned can be saved" (IV, 23). This function of guilt is hardly the quintessence of the normal heroic fantasy, whether the guilt derives from a problem in the primary or secondary world. The hero is usually the one who desires to assist the cause of the good and is not generally driven to it, Jonah-like, through his realization of great inadequacy or failure. Guilt is not

ennobling, but it is the stuff of our world, from which Covenant is never distant.

But guilt in itself is still not enough to effect the ultimate heroic deeds. As Covenant tells Trick, "I've got to give up guilt and duty, or whatever it is I'm calling responsibility these days. I've got to give up trying to make myself innocent again" (III, 306). When Covenant begins to give his own life meaning, to be responsible for all his failures without thought to duty or guilt, without even the motivation of hate and anger, then he can put away his thoughts of victimization and become wholly useful. When he realizes that everyone is a victim, especially so under the influences of the Sunbane, then he can see the necessity for his help. When he can go beyond the moral poison of victimization by employing disease and death against themselves, by recognizing that guilt, hate, and retribution by themselves are only masks of Foul, and that he shares in the very essence of Foul, then he can effect miracles for himself and others. When he fully understands that nothing can save him from death by disease or murder either in the primary or secondary world, and that whether mere human or immortal hero, he will make mistakes, regardless of how much attention he pays to himself, then he discovers the capacity to be a hero: "He laughed at the immense prospect of his futility. The folly of his attempts to survive alone amused him" (III, 275). He needs to go beyond himself so that he can perceive beauty and experience love in the most hideous humans and devastated landscapes. The recognition of the folly of escape and the immanence of death frees him to risk his life in order to save the girl near his farm from the rattlesnake poison; to strive with the shadow of Elena for the Staff of Law; to defy Lord Foul at Foul's Creche when he rejects the temptation of healing; and finally to surrender the ring to Foul. When he overcomes his foolish clinging to life, the destructive potential of hatred and retributive feelings, and the ultimate futility of slaughter, then he can risk all in order to help others in a peaceful way. Indeed, at the end of The Power That Preserves, he opts not to try to destroy Foul by force but intuitively begins to laugh at him. This laughter, joined by Saltheart and the dead Lords, resonates through Foul's Creche, crippling Foul, and allowing Covenant to embrace the Illearth Stone, reducing it and Foul to impotency. And in White Gold Wielder, by surrendering the ring to Foul and accepting his own death, he instills in Foul a false sense of victory and unlimited power. It is ironically Foul, not Covenant, who is finally defeated by his urge to escape - to escape the prescription of the Creator symbolized by and embodied in the Arch of Time. The knowledge and acceptance of death, the recognition that escape is impossible and undesirable, elevates Covenant above his dilemma and gives him creative ways to cope with evil.

The real significance, then, of The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever

lies in the way in which Covenant is not allowed to flee the circumstances and problems of either world, the way in which his human failings and guilt become his weakness and strength. The conditions within the primary world which deprive Covenant of his health, creativity, and social responsibility are exactly those that limit him in the secondary world. And only when he can live with these weaknesses in both worlds, drawing disease and death to him like cherished lovers, will he function as a genuine human being - with social commitment and human involvement despite a knowledge of weakness, shame, and guilt.

Unlike Tolkien's fiction where the hero can move from his home environment into a new and wonderful world where his senses and spirit are reinvigorated, neither Thomas Covenant nor the reader is allowed that respite. What is paralyzing in the "real" world is doubly paralyzing in the secondary world, and from that paralysis arises the foolish desire to escape. Although there is no exit, paradoxically there is recovery through an awareness and acceptance of the victimization at the heart of the human condition, the acceptance of the fact of mortality.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Stephen R. Donaldson, Lord Foul's Bane (New York: Ballantine Books [Del Ray], 1978), pp. 258-259. Henceforth, references to this edition as well as the other Chronicles will be cited with the text. Lord Foul's Bane will be cited as volume I; The Illearth War (New York: Ballantine Books [Del Ray], 1978) will be cited as volume II; The Power That Preserves (New York: Ballantine Books [Del Ray], 1978) will be cited as volume III; The Wounded Land (New York: Ballantine Books [Del Ray], 1980) will be cited as volume IV; The One Tree (New York: Ballantine Books [Del Ray], 1982) will be cited as volume V; and White Gold Wielder (New York: Ballantine Books [Del Ray], 1983) will be cited as volume VI. Since most readers will have access to the paperback editions, rather than the hardcover, I have chosen to use them. The only exception is White Gold Wielder which is available only in hardcover.

<sup>2</sup> Tree and Leaf (London, Boston, Sydney: Unwin Paperbacks, 1975), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary of the important characteristics of the hero see Lord Raglan, The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama, Intro. Walter Kaufmann (New York, London and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1979), p. xii.

<sup>4</sup> Linden Avery, of course, is as much victim and victimizer as Covenant. Her father has committed suicide at an early age, an act for which her mother blames her; when her mother is hospitalized in the last stages of cancer, Linden kills her, both to end her suffering as well as to prevent her recrimination against Linden for not stopping

the father's act of suicide. As long as Linden flees from her guilt, she is enmeshed in a loveless life. When she acknowledges the guilt, she is further along on the road to self-awareness and human love; but not until she goes beyond both escape and guilt can she love Covenant fully and carry on the quest.



Continued from page 13

- Passage in 1961. There is also one in the Penguin Classics series by A.T. Hatto.
14. Much as the greater world of Middle-earth lures various hobbits out of the Shire
  15. Such behaviour is 'true of both Bilbo and Frodo. Peregrin Took or Pippin found it vastly more difficult to refrain from asking questions, and so, being extremely curious by nature, he looked into a palantír and was thus questioned by Sauron.
  16. 300 lines in Chrétien become 2100 in the German poem.
  17. M.O.C. Walshe, Mediaeval German Literature (1962), p. 161.
  18. M.O.C. Walshe's term for the Parzival (op. cit.).
  19. Compare Tolkien's continual stress on pity, as in the remarks about Faramir  
He read the hearts of men ... but what he read moved him sooner to pity than to scorn. (*The Return of the King*, 337)
  20. The Inklings were brought into consideration of the Grail through Charles Williams' work. His novel, *War in Heaven* (1930 and, in a new edition, 1947) is on this theme, as are many of his Taliesin poems edited by C.S. Lewis in their joint work, *Arthurian Torso* (1948).
  21. In Chrétien's text in the H manuscript there are references to Snowdonia in Wales which must remind us of Tolkien's Caradhras, the peak north of Moria.
  22. See C.S. Lewis, 'The Dethronement of Power', *Time and Tide*, October 22, 1955, pp. 1373-74.
  23. E.g. Seville, Frull, Drave (a tributary of the Danube), as places, or Chrétien de Troyes, Guinther or Siegfried as people.
  24. For Kyot, see particularly Sacker, (op. cit.), pp. 112ff, and Mustard and Passage (op. cit.), pp. xxii - xxv.
  25. See, for example, 'The Time Analysis of the Poem', in Mustard and Passage (op. cit.), pp. 1 - liii.
  26. Sacker, *An Introduction to Wolfram's Parzival*, p. 142.
  27. This Thomist concept is usually termed "gradualism." Cp. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusculum ad hoc, quod in creaturis esset perfecta Dei imitatio, quod diversi gradus in creaturis invenirentur*.  
See J.F. Poag, "Hinc" and "Gradualismus" in the works of Wolfram von Eschenbach (Diss. Abst. Int., 1961).