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To Defend of to Correct: Patterns of Culture in *Always Coming Home*

Abstract

Relates Hilgartner and Bartter's extension of linguistic theory into behavior theory to the cultures of the Kesh and the Condors. Explains their cultural patterns of "image-correction" and "image-defense." Sees utopian and dystopian elements tempered by realistic views of human nature.

Additional Keywords

Bartter, Martha A.—Theory of behavior—Relation to Always Coming Home; Hilgartner, C.A.—Theory of behavior—Relation to Always Coming Home; Le Guin, Ursula K. Always Coming Home

To Defend or to Correct

PATTERNS OF CULTURE in *Always Coming Home*

by Lillian M. Heldreich

In *Always Coming Home* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) Ursula K. Le Guin has imagined a future society of people who have come to live in harmony with their natural environment, a people who have almost come full circle from industrialization to its opposite, a blend of agrarian and hunter-gathering societies. Whether this is truly a utopia or not is open to question; "Pandora," the not-quite-fictional visitor to the future, has an argument with one of the natives about whether she and her society are actually utopians. The native says that this is not utopia; Pandora responds "The hell it ain't." (316)

If Pandora could not figure out whether or not this was utopia, neither could some critics of the "hard science fiction" school, who perceived the novel as stereotyped, overly idealistic, and soft-headed in the manner of 60's flower children. Abandoning both high technology and war is more than these critics can swallow; all their toys have been taken away.

Such objections serve to sharpen Le Guin's point: human beings must make some radical changes in their attitudes toward their environment, parting with many of the 20th century's cherished ideals, if they are to have much of a future. But if we must abandon our materialism and our technology, what shall we replace them with? Le Guin takes us far in this thought-experiment, weaving an entire culture with its myths, a culture that has a religion and festivals but no God to worship; a culture that has a Way to be followed but no dogma to define it; a culture that has cautionary tales but no Hell for its transgressors. Le Guin's creation owes much to Native American culture, but it is not that, either. For the basis of Le Guin's culture is not the state or the tribe, but the community, and the community is upheld not by law but by *individual responsibility*.

Now the trick here is to figure out how to get individual human beings to behave that responsibly; perhaps the argument of Pandora, which parallels that of the critics, is true: "I never did like smartass utopians. Always so much healthier and saner and sounder and fitter and kinder and tougher and wiser and righter than me and my family and friends." (316)

That has been the problem with utopias all along — they would be fine, if only real people behaved that way. Pandora has been busy interviewing the real people of her utopia, people who don't always live up to their ideals, but who go on trying.

And while she was studying the people of the future, other researchers have been studying the people of the

present, trying to figure out how to get real people to learn to live together in something approaching peace, with attitudes that would preserve, rather than exploit, our resources. Through synchronicity or coincidence, C.A. Hilgartner, assisted by Martha A. Barter, has been working to extend linguistic theory into behavioral theory, and the model he and his associates have developed corresponds very well with the cultures of Le Guin's Kesh and their enemies, the Condors.

According to Hilgartner/Barter ("On War and Peace," unpublished monograph, 1987), human beings operate by "lived premises" according to which they *act*, in contrast to "abstract premises," that they talk about and *believe* they act by. Human beings are aware of their abstract premises, but unaware of their lived premises, a fact which makes behavioral change very difficult.

Hilgartner sees as very important the underlying lived premise, "My picture of what's going on in and around me is a point-for-point perfect map of what's *really* going on." Such a map "confers absolute certainty. I won't need to waste time examining the territory, because after all, I have perfect information to guide myself by, without looking [at the territory]... Questions concerning how I generated my (perfect) map... won't even occur to me [because] I already know what's *really* going on. (2-3)

Hilgartner calls actions based on such premises *image defending*. That is, the infallible "picture of reality" defends itself from being compared with reality or anything else that might threaten its infallibility. The internal dialogue of image-defense goes like this:

Since my map is RIGHT, yours either has to agree with mine or else it's WRONG... if you fail to agree... to bring your map into conformity with mine — you leave me no choice but to defend my own Truths, and to discredit or suppress your mistaken Opinions — perhaps, in the end, to discredit or suppress you.... (3)

If an individual's or a culture's lived premises are image-defending, the result is a social pattern of "hostility and conflict." Within individuals, this train of thought produces "the self-annihilating, self-defending pattern which therapists call *repression*." (3)

Hilgartner maintains that if this conflict-generated mental structure were the only underlying human lived premise, the race wouldn't have survived very long. Instead, it is balanced by an opposite lived premise, that we operate not from absolute certainties, but from a series of guesses, or hypotheses, that must be always tested against reality. The internal dialogue may sound like this:

My picture of what goes on in and around me DOES NOT and CANNOT provide a point-for-point perfect map—of what's really going on, or of anything else. But I can keep testing, and can operate on guesses that have survived testing." (4)

This second lived premise is *image-correcting* rather than *image-defending*. When people who operate on *image-correcting* premises disagree, they examine each other's hypotheses for what might prove true and useful. According to Hilgartner, "Image-correcting lived theories yield inter-personal relations of cooperation, collaboration and mutual support. (6)

As a corollary, an individual operating on *image-correcting* lived premises will attempt to examine her perceptions, to test them against reality, so that she develops into a whole and independent person, rather than one driven by the compulsions of *image-defending* behavior; she will not be a slave to the customs of her society, if they prove counter-productive in her case.

If the terms seem confusing, here's the simple analogy: You are on the Interstate, approaching a strange city. You have last-year's map your in-laws gave you. You are going to get off at Exit 29. But when you drive past where it should be, it is not there; instead, a mass of construction equipment blocks the exit. "But it's ON THE MAP," you protest. At that moment, you are "image defending" your map. To get where you want to go, you will have to "image correct" by asking directions, or figuring out an alternate route.

Image-correction sounds ridiculously obvious, deceptively simple. Any right-headed person would make corrections at that point. Yet much human nature seems to demand *image-defense*. Many are the drivers who will proceed uncorrected, sure that Exit 29 must be "around here somewhere," despite repeated urgings that they try another route or ask for directions.

An examination of Le Guin's future society shows that there are strong correlations between her portrait of a people who have learned to live appropriately and the behaviors necessary for a person to function according to *image-correcting* lived premises. In fact, Le Guin has produced a mythos for *image-correction*, and a cultural model that has an advantage over most utopias: it takes into account human nature, and defines the ideal as much by how people fall short of it as by how they achieve it. And for those who do manage to live appropriately, the process is one of slow growth within the self and community. No sudden revelations, here.

To look at the overall patterns of *image-correction* and *image defense*, we must examine the two cultures that approach conflict in *Always Coming Home*, the Condors and the Kesh.

The Condor culture has elements that parallel historic cultures. Their religion is rigid and monotheistic: One made everything, but One is not part of the creation;

Things are not part of him nor is he part of them, so you must not praise things, but only One... the One reflects himself in the [person called] Condor; so the Condor is to be praised and obeyed... The hontik, that is women and foreigners and animals, have nothing to do with One at all; they are purutik, unclean, dirt people. They were made by One to obey and serve the Sons,

writes Stone Telling. (200) Individual Condor people are never to question the judgements of their superiors, for they are to regard the map of their religion and hierarchy as representing the only real territory; all deviant maps or perceptions they must reject without question. As a result, the visions of their leaders have led the Condor people to abandon their original nomadic existence, settling in an area that cannot support their overpopulated numbers. They have enslaved their neighbors, exploited their environment, and pursued a policy of conquest beyond the limits of their supply lines. Like Napoleon in Russia, they are on the verge of defeat at the hands of their own inability to perceive reality.

In contrast, the Kesh have *image-corrected* their behavior into a pattern that lets them survive in their mineral-depleted, partially poisoned environment. The goal of each individual Kesh is to grow into a whole person, fully responsible to herself, to her community, and to her world. The Kesh are aware that the institution of war has caused part of their world's physical malaise; in their parlance, a person who thinks war is a good way to live "has his head on backwards," their metaphor for thinking that is divorced from objective reality. The Kesh take from the environment only what they need; they regulate their population within the limits of their resources. They pray to no gods; instead, their holistic vision sees the natural world as a component of transcendence, and transcendence as a component of the natural world, moving in a pattern of life and death. Always they must be open to changes in their lives and in their world; they must constantly test their maps against the territory.

The two cultures can be typified by their methods of conflict-resolution. The Condors have no wish to settle differences with their neighbors, except by conquest and domination. The methods of the Kesh are vastly different; they work diligently at resolving conflict without violence. The story of "Trouble with the Cotton People" illustrates the Kesh way. The people who grow cotton have been trading shoddy raw material for the good Kesh wine. When the Kesh try to negotiate, the cotton folk stall and bluster. The Kesh negotiator, well named Patience, suspects that they are ashamed of something; finally he draws out their tale of failed crops, which they blame on themselves, and are therefore ashamed of. He matches their tale with tales of Kesh difficulties with the wine crop, so putting them at ease, letting them know that they do not need to save face. After seven days of negotiation, the Kesh and the cotton people re-write their contract to everyone's satisfaction. Patience is a master of *image-correction*, not losing his temper when the cotton people become defensive, but waiting to see what it is that has caused them to

react so, looking beyond their words to the cause.

The people of Shinshan try the same tactics when the Condors want to build a permanent bridge over the Na, but because they are feeling threatened, they are not quite as successful. Still, they get a compromise: Abhao agrees to a temporary bridge.

Le Guin does recount one Kesh war, "The War with the Pig People," but it is limited, with most of its participants being adolescents; when it is over, everyone is saddened by the resulting deaths, and the adults are woefully embarrassed that a few older people took part. According to one Kesh commentator on the Warrior Cult,

I have come to think that the sickness of Man is like the mutating viruses and the toxins: there will always be some form of it about, or brought in from elsewhere... It is sickness of our being human, a fearful one. (386).

Classified by their lived premises, the two peoples seem to typify image-defense and image-correction. But reduced that much, to extremes, they would indeed be "smart-assed Utopians" and dystopians. In a later paper, Hilgartner holds that Western European languages force us into dichotomies because they define things in binary language. A thing is either this OR that; we do not, like the Chinese, have a language system that can name a thing or condition as being this AND that, or this BECOMING that. But Le Guin, the liar who tells the truth, overcomes the handicap of our language by placing the individuals in her societies everywhere on a scale between the extremes of image-defending and image-correcting. The unconventional structure of her book, with its folk tales, poems, and dramas increases her cast of characters, so that the reader may see them interacting with each other, with other cultures, and with their inner selves.

Exemplifying the conflicts between the Condors and the Kesh are Stone Telling's parents, the Condor general Abhao and the Kesh woman, Willow. Their story is a tragedy, for both are so caught in their own images of reality that they cannot truly see each other. When the Condors pass through Shinshan, Willow falls in love with their general, who leaves her after a season to follow his troops. Nine years after their daughter is born, the Condor army returns to the Valley of the Na. Nine-year-old North Owl (Stone Telling's child-name) sees her normally subdued mother transformed by joy: "She was lighting the oil lamp we used at table. So much beauty had come to her that for that moment I did not know I was looking at my mother but saw a stranger... standing there with brightness in her hands... Willow was full of beauty that night, full of power. She was proud, she was great." (27-28)

Willow is whole only when her husband returns, unlike her mother, Valiant, whose husband lives elsewhere a good part of the year, because, says Valiant, "Living with my husband is like eating unleached acorns" (p. 8). Valiant does very well with her home and her weaving as the center of her life.

But Willow's whole life is her Condor husband, whose language she cannot speak; she seems to be proud of him because he is a warrior, a profession unacceptable to the Kesh. Yet while she prizes this difference, she is unable to accept its consequences – that her husband must move at the command of his military leader. He loves and values Willow, but he sees her as less important than his Condor duty. Willow loves and values Abhao, but she wants him to leave his command and become her Kesh man.

Reflecting on her parents, Stone Telling says,

"We have to learn what we can, but remain mindful that our knowledge not close the circle, closing out the void, so that we forget that what we do not know remains boundless, without limit or bottom, and that what we know may have to share the quality of being known with what denies it. What is seen with one eye has no depth.

"The sorrow of my parents' life is that they could see with one eye only." (29)

Willow and Abhao each have a map, determined by what each one needs, and each is unable to see that her or his map does not match the real territory, so each is unable to make the compromises that would have allowed them a life, rather like that of Willow's mother, a life of being together and apart.

Abhao asserts that as a soldier he cannot farm –

There are things a man can and cannot do. Surely you understand that!

"Surely," my mother said, looking at him with admiration of his dignity. So it all passed without either understanding what the other said and yet without anger or hurt, since their love and liking kept the harm from building up, kept washing it away, like water in the millwheel." (32)

And so neither can correct her or his image of the other; their images defend themselves; they see "with one eye only." So these two, denizens of utopia and dystopia, show that even a negative society will produce individuals who cannot realize the possibilities their society makes available.

Thus when Abhao must leave for another year, Willow tells him "Once, for nine years... Not Twice. You are my husband; you are not. My house holds you; it does not. Choose." (39) Willow's language, which normally holds all possibilities, had become binary to her; she will not give Abhao a middle course; bound by the Condor's code, he cannot stay. She puts his belongings out of her house, divorcing him by Kesh custom. And Willow takes back her child-name, Towhee. Now she rejects reality entirely, for as her daughter observes, "To go back to a first name is to go against the earth." (173) And after this Towhee ceases to grow.

To a limited extent, however, her husband continues his growth. When his daughter is an adolescent, he takes her home with him, in response to her pleading, although in his patriarchal society a daughter, especially a half-breed, is a liability. He loves her, it seems, as much as a son,

provides for her as best he can, and finally endangers himself to save her and her daughter from the violent breakup of his society. Abhao is not a stereotyped monster, but a man caught between cultures.

As for Stone Telling, her part is to experience an alien culture, so that she may value herself and her own, to spend her lifetime correcting early images. For the first nine years of her life she has no father present, so she thinks of herself as half a person, illegitimate. She is alienated from the culture of Sinshan; she feels complete and normal for awhile, but then he leaves again, and she goes through the tumult of adolescence confused, both hating the Condors and wanting to be like her father's people.

"I put my hands in the water," Stone Telling writes, but there was no washing away the stuff that choked up my heart and mind... I longed to go walk on the mountain again, but knew that if I did it would be no good; I would put my feet in the tracks of the lion, on the way of the coyote, but would walk the circle of human anger" (p. 180).

Because her family itself is troubled, she is given too little guidance. "Things were not right in my household, and my people did not see to it that I had a proper education". (176)

A warrior cult springs up among the Kesh; North Owl falls in love with one of its members, and joins the women's corollary group, the Lamb Lodge. Its tenets are hierarchical, chief among them the subjugation of women to men. "The whole year I lived in the Lamb Lodge was a lie, a denial of my own knowledge and being, and yet a truth all the same," writes Stone Telling. Almost everything is double like that for adolescents; their lies are true and their truths are lies, and their hearts are broken by the world... The Lambs and Warriors were houses for adolescents, people who were not able to choose their own way yet, or unwilling ever to do so" (p. 184). With clearer eyes the older Stone Telling understands that fanaticism is an adolescent retreat from the adult necessity of image correcting, of choosing.

So North Owl's begging, at fifteen, to return to the Condor lands with Abhao, is the compulsory result of her adolescent confusion, while his decision to take her is the result of his grief over Willow's continued rejection. "We were both ill," says Stone Telling, "and our illnesses spoke one to the other. We seemed to choose, but were driven. I clung to him, yet I was the stronger." (187)

In the Condor lands, North Owl learns the extent of her mistake, makes very painful corrections of her images of Condors and Kesh. Stone Telling's writing is painful here, because the lessons were hard, and she regrets the earlier mistakes that led her on this path.

I tried to be a Condor woman... I wanted to leave the Valley... to be living a new way... But... I was too young, and had not considered existence, or read books, or trained with the Finders, or thought about history. My mind was not freed. It was held inside the Valley, instead

of holding the Valley inside it... the Warrior and Lamb cults had interfered with education and ceremony during my adolescence. So I was not free to go from the Valley. Not being entirely a person, I could not become a different person.

Also, because the way of the Condors is wrong-headed, the truths North Owl does know keep her from completely becoming the Condor woman, Terter Ayatyu. "I became as sick as I could, but I was not willing to die." (192-193)

As Ayatyu, which ironically means "nobly born" or "higher than other people," North Owl is married to a Condor man. Because she cannot leave without further disgracing her father, who is out of favor with The Condor, she stays, and observes as much as she can of Condor ways. "It was frightening to live in this kind of continuous war," North Owl reflects later.

The Dayao seemed never to decide things together, never discussing and arguing and yielding and agreeing to do something before they did it. Everything was done because there was a law to do it or not to do it, or an order... And if something went wrong it seemed never to be the orders, but the person who obeyed them, that got blamed... I learned, whether I wanted to or not, how to be a warrior. Where life has been made into a battle, one has to fight. (348)

Image-defense, as a life premise, makes all existence into a conflict.

Finally, Ayatyu hears of Condors executing people in the public square, and the idea is so abhorrent to her that "I felt my head turning... I was living among people who were going the wrong way. All I sought was to get my daughter and her mother away from them, to any other place. (353) Escaping after six or seven years, North Owl/Ayatyu takes the proper name for the middle years, Woman Coming Home.

Returning to Sinshan, Stone Telling learns that her grandmother has died, and her mother has regressed even further.

Her souls had shrunk away and unmade themselves. That is the danger of going backward in the way she had done when she took back her child-name. She had not gyred, but had closed the circle... She would not let things change any more for her. I gave her a last name in my mind: Ashes. (365)

When image-correction stops, when the individual wants to freeze reality, life stops.

But Woman Coming Home is now ready for positive image-correction. She finds herself attracted to the Warrior Lodge man she loved in adolescence, but she avoids a relationship with him. Later, she meets a man from another village, who wants to be with her, but still fearing the passion that destroyed her mother, she does not marry him until time has tested their relationship. She continues her education where it left off; she rebuilds her family's herds; she takes up her grandmother's weaving, so that she will be able to give to her community. She gives the story

of her life among the Condors to the scholars, so that their aberration may be better understood. Her last name, the name of her maturity, becomes Stone Telling, and her husband's, Stone Listening, and she is twice a grandmother as she ends her tale. Maturity has not erased the pain of her youth, but she has learned from it, and used it, and built on it, until her map matches her territory, and she is content.

To trace the concept of image-correction through all the myths and stories of the Kesh would be a fascinating but very long study. However, it is useful to note that the central mythos, without a god — we might call it non-theistic — leaves even the spiritual life open for image-correction. Pandora calls Kesh spirituality a Working Metaphor. Jackrabbit of Telina-na speculates on whether or not the universe is person, and who it is people greet when they say Heya! to a stone. He answers his own question:

I think it is one another whom we greet, and bless, and help. It is one another whom we eat. We are gatherer and gathered... It is with my voice that the blue rock speaks, and the word I speak is the name of the blue rock. It is with my voice that the universe speaks... Being is praise... frightened, I will trust; weak, I will bless; suffering, I will live... so I think I will live in the valley as best I can, and so die here, coming in the open door. (307)

The Valley culture has certain ceremonies by custom, but no one is told what to believe; each one must correct her image of transcendence for herself.

Freed of the metaphor of God in Man's image, and of the idea of special creation, the Kesh can correct modern humanity's ego-centric view of nature, viewing animals as people, and the earth as shared with all of its other life-forms. Human beings are thus somewhat diminished, but diminished into a place that gives them a chance to survive with the rest of Earth's children, rather than perish as ultimate lords of creation.

The forms of the festivals and ceremonies vary from place to place; if someone prefers the Water dance at Sinshan, she may travel there for that festival.

Similarly drama can be varied. Each play is made up of a few memorized "hinge" lines plus whatever a particular troupe feels is appropriate to add, adjusting for actors or audiences. Pandora attends a production of the play "Chandi," which mirrors the Book of Job except for the ending. In the version Pandora sees, the play focuses on how people turn away from a person who has suffered great misfortune, because they do not want to be reminded of all that a person can suffer. The actors tell Pandora that the emphasis can be radically different, as can the interpretation of the main character. Thus the drama is ever-changing, ever correcting its image.

Poetry, also, is concerned with the nature of things: poems like the "Bone Poems" are metaphors for the ever changing nature of things. The "Bone Poems" together form a metaphor for the nature of living with the

knowledge of morality. Throughout this long book, Le Guin returns again and again to the theme of becoming, of changing; in the compressed metaphors of the poems she comes closest to completely overcoming the binary strictures of English, suggesting to the mind of the reader

"The mountains and rivers of being,
the valley of possibility." (395)

The poems and ceremonies recorded by Pandora have a quality of open-endedness even though each has also a sense of closure. One poem can serve as an example: "Old Woman Sings"

I was a plum.
I have become
a prune, a prune,
dried on the seed.
Eat me, eat me!
Spit out the seed!
It will become
a tree, a tree,
blossoming plum.

The poem begins and ends with "plum," thus having a sense of completeness, but the concept between the plums is of ripening and going onward. Yet the reader is not told what to think. Instead, the compressed metaphor forces the reader to ponder, correcting her own image of what it means to be old. The poems are simple, but not self-explanatory; they are not the last word on a subject, but the first, openings for meditation, as are the ceremonial songs.

For the Kesh world-view is one without ultimate answers, except those that the natural world gives — and even those are seldom ultimate: what is appropriate in a wet year may not be suitable for a dry year. The recurring structures of the Kesh festivals provide the stability that maturing individuals need, but the absence of dogma provides the flexibility necessary for learning and adaptive behavior. To create so much beauty and ceremony for a system that has no creed and no dogma is a great accomplishment, and a great comfort to those of us who have bruised our mental muscles on the limitations of dogmas and creeds.

Image-correction by its very nature must lead people to an appropriate view of their place in the world. Brian Branston, in *The Lost Gods of England*, concludes his study of early Germanic religion with a plea for such a vision:

This is the lesson to be learnt from a study of Wayland's Bones, that man needs to integrate himself with Nature: for ultimately the Great Goddess is Nature from whom all life proceeds and to whom it will return... those individuals who take practical steps to make their peace with Nature in what they eat and drink, in how they think, sleep and behave — these peace-makers shall inherit the earth... We have to reach a symbiotic relationship with all else in the world, living or dead. No doubt some such was the aim of our ancestors and we may be wise to ponder on how they attempted to reach it. (201)

(Continued on page 66)

to illustrate the types of critical investigations possible with this word index. It is a tool that many in Lewis studies will find useful. (JRC)

Shippey, T.A. "An Interview with Tom Shippey."

Angerthas (publication of the Arthedain-Norges Tolkienforening, Oslo) 20 (June 1987): 18-27, and 21 (Oct. 1987): 20-29. [Tolkien]

Recorded in April 1987 by Johan Henrik Schimanski and Nils Ivar Agøy. Shippey's *Road to Middle-earth* grew out of his dissatisfaction with existing Tolkien criticism. He remembers the first Issacs and Zimbardo collection (*Tolkien and the Critics*, 1968) "with horror," in particular because of a piece where it was clear that the author did not know the difference between Old English and Old Norse" (20, p. 19). It was natural for Shippey to write his book because he shared with Tolkien the same academic background. He "knew in a way what Tolkien wanted to do" with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* and was confident in writing about them, but "wasn't sure how to treat *The Silmarillion*," not having seen the (then unpublished) materials behind it (20, p. 22).

Shippey speaks also on paganism, on Tolkien's use of words ("Tolkien was one of the most accomplished philologists the world has ever seen," 20, p. 26), on Tolkien's lack of popularity in Oxford, on *The Lord of the Rings* in relation to *The Lord of the Flies* and *Nineteen Eighty-four*, on *The Lord of the Rings* as "a work of anxiety and alarm" (21, p. 22), on Tolkien fandom, on Shippey's favorite works by Tolkien, on the cultural gap between American readers and Tolkien ("They really do see Tolkien quite wrong, for instance on matters of theology, on matters of politics, and also, actually - very, very critical for Tolkien - on matters of good manners and behaviour," 21, p. 26), among other subjects. (WGH)

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Annotated Hobbit*. Introduction and notes by Douglas A. Anderson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988; London: Unwin Hyman, 1989. xii + 337 pp. [Lewis (1), 4]

Anderson compared the various typesettings of *The Hobbit*, noted Tolkien's revisions, and corrected errors to produce "as perfectly as is possible" a text in "Tolkien's final intended form" (p. [321]). He introduces the text with an account of the writing of *The Hobbit* and a history of its publications in England in 1937 and in the U.S. in 1938. Portions of reviews by C.S. Lewis are quoted. Sources for *The Hobbit* include *Beowulf*, the fairy tale collections of Lang and the Brothers Grimms, works by George MacDonald, Tolkien's own "*Silmarillion*," and *The Marvellous Land of Snergs* by E.A. Wyke-Smith. The preliminary matter is accomplished by portraits of Tolkien, photographs of his desk and house at 20 Northmoor Road, Oxford, a facsimile of Rayner Unwin's manuscript review of *The Hobbit*, and reproductions of the binding and dust-jacket of the London, 1937 edition of *The Hobbit*, the jacket and variant title

pages of the Boston, 1938 edition, and the cover and one illustration from *The Marvellous Land of Snergs*.

The text proper is accompanied by further notes on Tolkien's sources, on the meaning of unfamiliar words such as *bannock* and *Tomnoddy*, on the etymology of words such as *warg* and *orc*, and on the relationship between *The Hobbit* and Tolkien's larger mythology. Thirty-three illustrations and maps by Tolkien for *The Hobbit*, including preliminary and unused paintings and drawings, are printed among the text in one or two colors. The remainder of 121 illustrations are chiefly from twelve translations of *The Hobbit*. Four poems by Tolkien are printed as annotations: "Goblin Feet" from *Oxford Poetry* 1915; "Progress in Bimble Town" from *Oxford Magazine*, 15 Oct. 1931 (never before reprinted); "The Dragon's Visit" from the *Oxford Magazine*, 4 Feb. 1937, and the revised ending and additional verse of the poem as they appeared in *Winter's Tales for Children* I (1965); and "Íúmonna Gold Galdre Bewunden" from the *Gryphon*, Jan. 1923 (the original version, never before reprinted though later revised as "The Hoard").

Appendix A, Textual and Revisional Notes, "attempts to account for all revisions made for the first edition (1937) through the three various resettings of the third edition (1966, 1966, and 1967-68) . . ." (p. [321]). The notes on revisions are preceded by a bibliographical history of *The Hobbit*. Appendix B describes the runes Tolkien used in *The Hobbit*. Following the appendices are a selective bibliography of works by Tolkien, of translations of *The Hobbit*, and of secondary sources, and notices of The Mythopoeic Society and The Tolkien Society.

The design of the dust-jacket of the American edition of *The Annotated Hobbit* is an adaptation of Tolkien's wraparound illustration of mountains, trees, etc. bordered with runes, such as normally appears on the jacket of trade hardcover copies of *The Hobbit*. The Unwin Hyman annotated edition (internally different only on the title leaf) is enclosed instead in a jacket predominantly of violet and black solids and featuring a reduced color facsimile of Tolkien's original art for the first edition dust-jacket, in black, green, blue and red.

Reviewed in *Mythlore* 55 (Autumn 1988). (WGH)

Vanachter, Jos. "The Staging of Theology: The Verse Drama of Charles Williams." *Inklings-Jahrbuch für Literatur und Ästhetik* 5 (1987): 155-172.

Vanachter explores the need for a Figure character to represent God in religious drama, focussing his analysis on the Flame in *The House of the Octopus*. [PAH]¶

To Defend or Correct (Continued from page 62)

Le Guin and Hilgartner, pondering our behavior, have looked to the future to delineate, one in fiction and the other in theory, how we might reach a reasonable accommodation with ourselves and with our world. Hilgartner's theory is simple. Le Guin's people are flawed and real. Perhaps that accommodation is not impossible, after all. ¶