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Reviews

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Reviews

Abstract

The Treason of Isengard: The History of the Lord of the Rings, Part Two. J.R.R. Tolkien. Reviewed by Glen GoodKnight.

Sold Into Egypt. Madeleine L'Engle. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

The Vampire in Literature: A Critical Bibliography. Margaret Carter. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

Payer of Tribute. Margaret Carter. Reviewed by Joe R. Christopher.

REVIEWS

Surprising Treasures

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Treason of Isengard: The History of the Lord of the Rings, Part Two*. The History of Middle-earth, Volume VII. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. 504 pp. ISBN 0-395-51562-9.

This is the second book that deals with the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*, continuing on where *The Return of the Shadow* leaves off. It is not on the writing of *The Two Towers* alone, since three-fourths deals with material found in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. It begins with variants of "Gandalf's Delay" (to return to the Shire) and ends with "The King of the Golden Hall." The list of surprises is nearly endless. Before the creation of Arwen, Aragorn was to marry Éowyn. Galadriel was Elrond's wife. Saruman's ring originally was not made by him, but by the elven smiths. Treebeard talks about Tom Bombadil. The ents are referred to as *hnau* (taken from Lewis' *Out of the Silent Planet*). Tolkien accepts the suggestion of Charles Williams to change a line. The guards of Rohan speak in Anglo-Saxon. The possibility that the Balrog of Moria could be Saruman (which would be consistent with Tolkien's angelology).

There are several illustrations, including an early version of the West Gate of Moria, a sketch of the Gate of Minas Morgul, and a sketch-plan for the scene of the Breaking of the Fellowship. The frontispiece is a color plate of an early version of Orthanc. We have 10 plates of portions of the first maps of Middle-earth. Last, but certainly not least for those linguistically inclined, is the Appendix on Runes. There are three forms of the Runes of Beleriand (which are like those of the dwarves in appearance). And then there is something not seen before — "The written form, or 'Alphabet of [P]engolod > Dairon,' which looks somewhat like Runes, Tengwar and Roman letters. Sample of writing are given. Christopher Tolkien has, as always, done a superb job of a very difficult task of editing.

— Glen GoodKnight

Moving Into the Unknown

Madeleine L'Engle, *Sold Into Egypt* (Wheaton, Illinois): Harold Shaw Publishers, 1989. 235 pp. ISBN 0-87788-766-7.

Readers who are familiar with twentieth century fantasy are likely to be aware of Madeleine L'Engle's Time Tetralogy are they are of C.S. Lewis' Narnian Chronicles, since both won similarly prestigious prizes and both are superb cycles of children's fantasy which present a rich world of sacralty and moral rigor. Readers of Lewis' adult religious works may not be so aware of L'Engle's own

adult religious books, of which this third volume of the Genesis Trilogy is a welcome and deeply moving capstone.

Constructed as a meditation on "the journey in of a spoiled and selfish young man finally becoming, through betrayal, anger, abandonment, unfairness, and pain, a full and complex human being," (p. 9), *Sold Into Egypt* gives voices also to the eleven brothers of Joseph — Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Napthali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, as well as to Dinah (Joseph's only sister), Potiphar's Wife, Gad's Wife, and Asenath (Joseph's Egyptian Wife).

Into this framework L'Engle weaves her own profound journey into widowhood, leaving her forty-year marriage so poignantly and powerfully described in *Two-Part Invention* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1988) for a new life, as she continues "to move out into the unknown." "I still believe," she writes in a tone of deep affirmation, bought at a great price, "that all things work together for good to them that love God — not just in this mortal life, but in God's ultimate purpose for Creation which are called on to observe and contemplate." (p. 222) Lewis would agree.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

The Lovely Lady

with a Thirst for Blood

Margaret Carter (ed.), *The Vampire in Literature: A Critical Bibliography*. Studies in Speculative Fiction, No. 21. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989. viii+136 pp.

Margaret Carter, *Payer of Tribute*. Metairie, Louisiana: Baker Street Publications, 1989. Chapbook. ii+32+iii pp.

At the 12th Annual Mythopoeic Conference, back in 1981, when the masquerade was put on and various members of the audience were dressed as figures from heroic fantasy, one vampiress appeared — a young woman (she seemed young) among the hobbits and Galadriels. Not to keep anyone in suspense, it was the author of these two volumes.

At that Conference, Margaret was selling copies of a poetry chapbook, *Daymares from the Crypt*, which contained one optimistic poem, alluding to Tolkien and originally published in Mythlore, and twelve Gothic lyrics, most of them about vampires ("Somewhere in Romania" and "The Immortal Count" allude to Dracula; "The Vampire Countess' Love Song" perhaps was inspired by Carmilla.) If this reviewer remembers correctly, Carter went

on to be a Steward of the Mythopoeic Society for awhile. And she manages to list some work by the Inklings in her bibliographic volume — *The Screwtape Letters* for the sake of the devils devouring the psychic energy (the souls) of their victims and *The Silmarillion* because Sauron turns into a vampire bat, dripping blood from his torn throat, after his defeat by Huan ("Quenta Silmarillion" XIX). (Carter does not give those details about the latter, but her abbreviations indicate the vampire has only a cameo role and that the vampire is a demon, not a member of the undead.) In her list of non-fiction articles, she includes two from *Mythlore*, including Gwendith Hood's "Sauron and Dracula." Carter mentions Hood's essay in the first of three introductions, and the reason for the inclusion of *The Screwtape Letters* in the third. (The other introduction, by Devendra P. Varma on "The Vampire in Legend, Lore, and Literature," seems to be a reprinting or recasting of an earlier essay of the same title by him.) At any rate, Carter has acknowledged her debts to the Mythopoeic Society as fully as could be expected in this volume.

There are five listings in the bibliography: "Vampire Fiction in English" (both novels and short stories, of which those marked with a V are traditional vampiric fictions; Carter does not number the items, unfortunately, but this reviewer counts 1090); "Anthologies of Vampire Fiction and Verse" (32 items); "Non-English Vampire Fiction in Translation" (923 items); "Dramatic Works on Vampires in English" (54 items, including movies); "Nonfiction Books" (this and the following section exclude popular writings on vampires and discussions of movies; 54 items); "Non-Fiction: Articles" (79 items). Obviously, this is a thorough work, as one would expect from Carter, who has edited one vampiric fiction anthology, edited one collection of criticism on *Dracula*, and written two books on (in one case) or related to (in the other) the topic of literary vampires. She also has the benefit of having a forerunner in Martin V. Riccardo's *Vampires Unearthed* bibliography (1983).

Two general flaws appear, however. First, in Carter's admirable desire to list the first appearance of the short stories, she has left an average library user — but one with a taste for the Gothic — with no way to find some of the stories. Clark Ashton Smith's "The Epiphany of Death" may have appeared in *The Fantasy Fan* in 1934, but which of his books has it been collected? Both the original appearance (for scholarship) and later reprintings (for availability) would be helpful. (If the anthologies were numbered, a brief cross-reference to reprints there would also be useful. Riccardo is more help than Carter here, and users may well want to have both books available.)

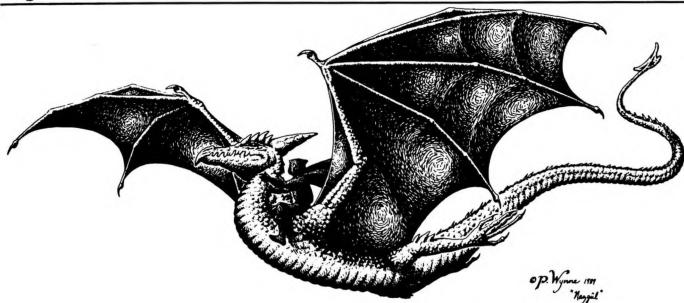
Second, despite the book's title . . . in *Literature*, Carter does not have a section on poetry. Riccardo does. Carter does not even list the contents of the anthologies, so no poetry can be established that way. Not that Riccardo is perfect in the area — if Carter were listing vampiric poems, she presumably would have included Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Christabel" as a variant form; Riccardo does not have it. (He also misses Carter's chapbook of verses and a number of other poems.)

Some omissions in Carter's book may also be mentioned. She lists Anthony Boucher's "They Bite" as involving the undead, although the beings in that story are called ogres (in the sense of cannibals), rather than vampires; but she misses one other by Boucher, "Summer's Cloud." This short story is Boucher's one tale clearly on the traditional vampiric theme; it is surprising Carter misses it, for while its original publication is obscure (*The Acolyte*, Summer 1944), the story has been reprinted in an obvious source (*Rod Sterling's "The Twilight Zone" Magazine*, June 1981). But — before going on to another type of omission — it should be added that Carter does not list more than twice as many pieces of fiction as Riccardo does. This reviewer especially appreciates her inclusion of James S. Hart's "The Traitor" (1950), which he considers the best vampiric short story he has read, both for style (Hart is good with similes) and content.

A couple of missed articles may also be noted, although Carter is current enough to list even John Allen Stevenson's excellent "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of *Dracula*" from *PMLA* in 1988. But she misses Haydn Williams' "Late Victorian Gothic and the Numinous: The Vampire Theme" (pp. 96-107) and R.J. Dingley's "Count Dracula and the Martians" (pp. 108-118) in *The Nameless Word: Victorian Fantasists — Their Achievement, Their Influence*, ed. J.S. Ryan, Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the Inner Ring: The Mythopoeic Literature Society of Australia, 1986 (Armistide, South Wales: University of New England, n.d. [1986 or 1987]). Williams' essay is the better of the two, with its religious theme (the vampire as an anti-Christ; Dingley's essay is a comparison of *Dracula* and H.G. Wells' *Invasion from Mars*. But it both should be listed by Carter.

In short, this is a good bibliography, with only minor flaws. But what about Carter as an author — as a fiction writer, not a poet? This reviewer has read only two of her pieces of fiction, although five additional ones are listed in her bibliography. "Rite of Passage" (*The Vampire Journal*, No. 5, Summer 1989) is set in the modern U.S., the vampires being a separate parasitic race. But *Payer of Tribute* — the work being reviewed here — is set in the medieval era, in which Isobel, the miller's daughter, substitutes herself for her betrothed sister, Alison, as a sacrifice to the "demon" of the keep — the castle — in the forest. Essentially, this is the romantic story — the *Jane Eyre* or *Rebecca* plot — of the maiden who goes to the lonely house and eventually falls in love with the dark, Byronic master of the household (here without children or servants — or a mad wife in the attic). Carter seems to be exploring, in several different guises, the common use of vampirism as a symbol for sexuality. "Rite of Passage," just mentioned, is essentially about a young male vampire's non-sexual puberty — non-sexual, at the literal level.

What works least well in this novelette is the description of the vampire's wings. (Carter wrote a prequel to this story, "Demon on the Hill," which may have more fully explained them; but it is one of the five not seen by this



reviewer.) The vampire appears early in the story flying, but at the keep he seems to be without wings. Eventually, Isobel sees them unfold: "The top layer of his back muscles ... folded back like the carapace of an insect." An earlier description of the wings also keeps this insect image:

Pale green and veined like moth wings, they spanned twice his height, spreading almost across the width of the small chamber. . . . Isobel's hands crept irresistibly toward them, tentatively touching, then stroking the silky surface.

In the context of the story, the wings also may be read sexually; but the point here is that no moth wings are going to support an equivalent of a human's weight, which this vampire is shown to have — and twice he carries a human (each time a woman) in this chapbook, thereby nearly doubling his weight. No "willing suspension of disbelief" will make those wings work. It is this weight/wing relationship which has kept insects small and birds hallow boned.

(It is tempting — because of the comparisons quoted above — to think the vampires in this novelette are supposed to be an insect race that has protected and hidden itself by developing intelligence and using mimicry of the human form; mosquitoes suggested an analogy for blood sucking. That would explain Reynard's — the vampire's — cold flesh in a different way. If so, the relationship presumably would not be consummated except in the symbolic exchange of blood. But the intense love emotions on both sides, as well as a few other details, suggest that Carter is not doing an inverted rewrite of Philip Jose Farmer's *The Lovers*, but simply a vampiric version of modern Gothica.)

Of course, the story would not work if it were not emotionally loaded in certain ways. Isobel's family is not warm and loving (her mother is dead, her father likes her as a book-keeper); her village is superstitious and judgmental; its Christianity is not shown as charitable. The

vampire, on the other hand, is cultured, having a library of both English and French books; he has pondered his origin in terms of the Bible; he tries to control his desire for Isobel's blood (the sexual analogy works well there); he nearly dies in despair — he does not hunt forest animals for their blood — while she ib back in her village, even though he has sent her there. In short, the village is not the center of the love (*storge* or *agape*); the keep has a substitute for *eros* and has, eventually, a touch of *philia*. Even the moth-wings are emotionally loaded; they are less negative in connotation than bat-wings would be.

Ah well, the Inklings romanticized their Christianity. Carter, in this story, has not tied the romantic to the religious but has, instead, romanticized the dark lover, the cold man (physically, psychologically) who turns out to be physically and psychologically dependent on the warm-hearted woman; in one sense, she has romanticized the perverted lover, whose fetish denies normal love-making, replacing it with a non-fertile dependency which the abused woman, having no other lover offered her, comes to desire.

The last clause above is not entirely what Carter intended (although, being a critic as well as a writer, she was probably aware of the possible reading); but — as is often the case in fantasy — the symbols are there. Whatever the current revival of vampiric fiction means — a revival which Carter's bibliography faithfully records — the vampire is an archetypal figure of evil, either evil power or evil sexuality, or both (even if, as in Carter's story, softened to a Byronic attractiveness). Tolkien knew this, and his vampire reflects Sauron's evil power — although Tolkien later abandoned the non-Nordic figure. No doubt the revival of vampiric literature implies something about our times. But that would be the matter for an article, not a review; Carter's writings, scholarly and imaginative, provide some of the basis for such a study — or a number of other reactions. Blood, as they say, will tell.

—Joe R. Christopher