

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

JOHN ABBOTT, (Rowans, 18, Eden Ave,
Wakefield, Yorkshire, WF2 9DJ.)
What about Mallorn 6? For my money
(I did pay, I tell you), it was no
better than Mallorns 4 and 5- though
that's pretty good. This was another
arresting cover- "I am inspector
Balrog of Sauron Yard Mordor Squad
and you had better come along

quietly else I'll fump yer." Of the other drawings I particularly
liked Jon Harvey's own, apart from the one on page 37. But who is the
guy dressed in seaweed on page 16? Crystalman? A stone giant? Good
heavens no, its my Uncle Arnold- the fool will get himself arrested and
bring shame on the whole family.

Shortage of contributions- As others have indicated, by the time most
members had learned who the editor of 16 was, it was apparently too
late to send anything. That was so in my case, anyway.

Tony Fallone had obviously put some thought into his review of "Voyage
to Acturus"; but doesn't the lad dismiss the entire human race rather
lightly? Plenty of interest, too in Jon Harvey's "Huntsmen" article.
"Belladonna Goes to a Party" was fine. This is the sort of thing Mrs.
Chapman writes really well. B.T., please leave Sir John up de Creke
and produce some more of this splendid "autobiographical" material.
So far you have only hinted at the interesting people and places you've
visited. Is it true that you crossed the Baltic in a teapot?

Where were the LoC's on Mallorn 5, then? Losst, Gollum?

Having read Mr. S. Long's ungracious attack upon Miss Nell Karley's
article on ~~heraldry~~ heraldry, I promptly wrote a half-page comment
for Mallorn entitled "Yank go Home". However, after pausing for reflec-
tion, I decided not to send it. We aren't ready yet for World War III.
(Lapsing into editorial brackets, we'd like to remark that we thought
San Long singularly careless not to check on who was editing the next
Mallorn. Just think of all the vicious replies Nell could have made,
unhampered by editorial "discretion". However she's not making use
of this unfair advantage, except to point out that she did say her
additions were of her own manufacture, and its quite common to give
an heraldic tree a round to stand on.))

JIM ALLAN, (144 Mary St. Orillia, Ont., Canada, L3V 3 B4.)

Mallorn 6 was a good interesting issue, with Belladonna's account of
the party, Jon Harvey's "The huntsmen of Fiction" and A.R. Fallone's
review of "Voyage to Acturus" as the highlights.

It might be noted that "Perelandra" (or "Voyage to Venus" as the
Pan book version calls it) by C.S. Lewis was in part written as an
answer to Lindsay's book.

Mike Cruden's "Wanderer of the Wilderness" should be helpful to
those who like to see some of the individual stories in "TLotR"
detached and presented on their own. But it was a trifle spotty,
especially in not even mentioning that turning point where Aragorn

for the first and only time rejecting Gandalf's advice, uses the palantir to reveal himself to Sauron, thus single handedly bringing on the assault on Minas Tirith. Also Aragorn's betrothal to Arwen did not "happen only a short time before he met Frodo and his company." Unless you consider 30 years a short time. Look at the chronology in Appendix B.

Also, the treatment of Eowyn's attachment to Aragorn was rather superficial. Aragorn never portrays for her any feeling of a romantic nature, while Eowyn's love is compounded to the largest extent of adolescent hero-worship. However, in an article in "Orcrest 4/Tolkien Journal 13" Richard West, commenting on the Tolkien manuscripts at Marquette University writes, "We can watch as a romance between Aragorn and Eowyn is excised, and the character of Arwen written into the narrative."

Archie Mercer's article on the races was rather confused. Certainly there are problems when trying to apply the terminology of evolutionary theory to races, many of which, are created. However, if you do, and using fertile intermarriage as a sign of belonging to the same species, then Men and Elves certainly do. And since Tolkien says that "Hobbits are relatives of ours: far nearer to us than Elves, or even than Dwarves," it would appear that all the Free Peoples save Ents should be entered as varieties of Homo Sapiens.

But of course, when talking about created races, such as androids, the whole category system becomes irrelevant. Also, there is the possibility of genetic engineering, which it is speculated today, could be used to produce interspecies, hybrids. (I expect that some such process may be what produced the half-orcs half-men.) With processes like this going on, the whole picture becomes a vast muddle, so that even Gandalf isn't sure whether Beorn is "a man descended from the first men who lived before Smarg or the other dragons came to this part of the world..." or whether he is "a bear descended from the great and ancient bears of the mountains that lived there before the giants came".

The suggestion that men today are of partly Orkish descent is an interesting thought.

About Lin Carter's book on "ELotR"; it can only seem "quite scholarly and well researched" to those who have little or no familiarity with the texts he is discussing. If you do know more than a little, you will find Carter infuriatingly inaccurate, incomplete, and surprisingly pretentious. Its real value may lie in pointing out what should be done in the way of writing a history of secondary world fantasy and in discussing Tolkien in relation to probable sources, and inspiring someone to do it. The problem with discussing the mythological and legendary material behind Tolkien's work is that Tolkien himself knows much more about such literature than anyone else who has tried to treat him from that angle. Only someone with a thorough background in medieval literature, Teutonic philology, European folklore, and Celtic studies could really have enough grasp of Tolkien's own imaginative background to fit Tolkien's Middle-earth into its proper perspective in relation to such sources. Otherwise, as with Carter, the scholar only sees certain similarities between a few texts and a few folklore beliefs that happen to be familiar to him, and jumps to the oddest conclusions on that basis.

This type of work may seem a perfect task for the Tolkien Society to undertake, since you people over there have easy access to place-name traditions, folklore traditions, and in particular, Celtic tradition, which is very hard to get at over on this side of the Water.

I agree completely about short book reviews. Unless the book is an especially unusual one that warrants being brought to the immediate attention of your audience, or unless it is one that is not easily

available in every book store, why bother? The reader is going to learn less from the review than from thumbing through a book rack.

BELLADONNA TOOK (Mrs. Vera Chapman, 21, Harrington Hou. Stanhope St., London NW1)

Well, well -- exit Sir John. Perhaps rather a pity, as his next adventures were going to be much better, with some fighting; and ordeals by fire, water and earth, also a chance to show that what I meant by "Sans-Joy" was not the study of comparative religion, but the shallow and prejudiced conclusions drawn therefrom by some minds. There was also "Sans-Joy" to be encountered. But let it pass. Sir John's lack of gallantry is explained by the fact that I did not want to introduce a distraction at that point and so made haste to turn my narrator into a little dog as quickly as possible. However, I did not actually write that story for Mallorn, but for a quite different audience. I only submitted it to the Mallorn because no other fiction had been submitted at all. Now then! What about it? If you think you can write a more acceptable story, lets have it! ((See "Vuldathoom" by Gordon Larkin.))

A few further points: All that about tails! I'd never heard of Cornishmen having tails, but I do know that the ENGLISH were said by the French to have tails -- all through the French wars of the Middle Ages, the French soldiers' name for the Englishmen was "Taillards". The story was that the English had cut off the tail of St. Thomas a Becket's horse, for which crime their descendants were forever condemned to be born without tails. The story may have grown out of the rather more credible one that the pious devotees of St. Thomas, pulled all the hairs out of the horse's tail for holy relics. ((John Harvey in "The Plantagenets" has another explanation of Englishmen's tails; "St. Augustine and his missionaries arrived at Cerne in Dorset, where the inhabitants (proud of their heathen sanctuary, whose tutelary figure on the neighbouring chalk down may be seen) fastened cows' tails to their garments. For this they found their fitting punishment; they and their descendants should have tails for evermore.))

Mallorn 6 in general: very good, and long awaited! Lets keep it going. Jon Harvey's article on the "Huntsmen of Fiction" is excellent, but I have a few points: I think he tends to confuse two distinct kinds of spectres-- the "Wild Hunt" in all its forms, which harries the souls of the damned, or consists itself of damned souls (don't forget the famous sea-going one, the Flying Dutchman.)-- and on the other hand, the protective guide of the dead, Hornes Psychopompos, and the Valkyries who were sent to bring the souls of the BLESSED. The Banshee is not a "Hunter" nor, strictly speaking, a "Guide of Souls", her function is to warn, and also, by her ritual keening, to ensure proper respect to the family she represents, for she is an hereditary ghost.

Particularly good artwork, though the "Ring" portrayed on pages 31 and 32 is more of a torque, or even a knot of rope, also we are told that the One Ring had no stone bezel or knob. The heading to "Hobbit Mail" on page 38 I understand is by Mervyn Peake, so those people can't be hobbits-- not too unlike them, but I'm sure hobbits don't have those long, ratlike noses. I like the illustrations to Mike Cruden's article. Also the cover design-- yes, that could be a Balrog and the two supporting trolls are most convincing!

PAT McINTOSH, (66, Highburg Rd., Glasgow G12 9EN)

I liked the article about Aragorn. (And its artwork) We need more critical essays like this. However, it is inaccurate in one or two places. The "All that is gold does not glitter" rhyme is not Gandalf's but Bilbo's, first quoted by Gandalf. He does not mention Aragorn's foreknowledge of (among other things) some doom awaiting



Gandalf in Moria, nor does he notice the importance of the meaning of Aragorn's pre-manhood name (Estel = Hope) in relation to frequent remarks like "Light stands between us and the night of Mordor, save hope only." (Galadriel - quoted from memory.) And why drag in the God-and-Jesus simile? Aragorn is a man of wisdom and power, and not of the common race of men; Gandalf is one, and ultimately the foremost, of those sent to bring about the downfall of Sauron in this shape. Neither one has god-like powers of creation, or even prophet-like powers to suspend natural laws; and medieval kings of England were believed to have magical powers of healing. It is one of the gifts that go with kingship.

I couldn't disagree more about the romance between Aragorn and Eowyn. She can't be the first girl to develop a crush on a handsome, world-worn fighting man who looks different from all the men around her; but what moves Aragorn is surely pity, as he says himself, and recognition of Eowyn's painful, tentative feelings. His heart is given already, and completely; hers is not given at all, as she finds later on the walls of Gondor. But apart from this and one or two other trivialities, I thought the essay both perceptive and informative.

Archie Mercer's list of races of Middle-earth is another useful analysis. I am puzzled by his remark that the Easterlings and Haradrim "are not strictly of Middle-earth." How do we define Middle-earth? I thought it was the whole of the lands this side of the Sundering Seas. I love Bryan Talbot's drawings.

Jon Harvey's essay on the Wild Hunt in Literature is informative, and I have extracted a list of future reading from it; but it is a bit undigested, isn't it? What about more critical evaluation of the use of the Wild Hunt, rather than a long list of who did?

And we come to the postbag. Somebody likes Moorcock's books. I did, until I recognised the same plot third time round. The blurb on his latest refers to it as a new product of "Moorcock's dream machine" which made me stand in a busy bookshop and giggle -- it's just the impression I had. The author presses some buttons, turns a handle, and out it comes, no sweat. Well, it sells. (I wonder where he got the machine..?)

Mrs. Chapman knows just where she stands with fiction writing now, doesn't she? Some of the criticism is justified, but destructive



criticism- though easier to write- reflects badly on the critic. Personally, I thought it a pity she used the dream-framework. I know it has a pedigree going back to Gilgamesh but just now it is so out of fashion as to appear dowdy. However that was offset by the technical standard of the writing, which said exactly what it intended in exactly the right words. Even allowing for typing errors this is not a virtue of all of Mallorn 6. Perhaps with a more attention-getting plot? What I do question is whether Mallorn needs a fiction spot. In a journal like this, fiction must necessarily come up for comparison with The Book, and mine, for one, couldn't stand up to that. Otherwise, it would have to be completely different, and thus outside the field of interest of the zine. Far better, surely, to send fiction to Anduril and confine Mallorn to poetry and literit. oriented Tolkien-wards.