

The Polder and The Pale

by Tom La Farge

What is the value of Fantasy? Among the kinds of writing where does it stand? If it is “subliterary,” then what is the literature that excludes it? If it is “genre” writing, then is there some other writing that does not bend to generic constraints or that uses them in some more honest way? If it is “escapist,” as opposed to “serious,” then from what does it propose an escape, and what is the seriousness it lacks? And what does fantasy writing have to do with fantasy, and what is the value of fantasy?

I have been looking into these questions and find I am not alone in asking them. Many readers and writers who love Fantasy are engaged in justifying their taste, but there is something strange about their apologies: they are voiced as one side of a debate whose other side is nowhere to be heard.

Who is saying, “Fantasy is inferior, fantasy is for children, don’t read fantasy”? Is it the professoriat, the English teachers and librarians, the publishers and reviewers, the mainstream writers, the poets? In a restricted way I move around among these people – I am a writer and a teacher – and I don’t hear them expressing contempt for Fantasy. Of course there are real literary snobs. And of course “Fantasy” includes its share of purely commercial work for them to turn up their noses at. But the problem I want first to address, in as honest a way as I can, is the caricature that defenders of Fantasy make of the party they perceive as dismissive of fantasy. For it is a fact that in apologies for Fantasy the general undertone is one of grievance. Never mind that writers in “subliterary genres” – King, Rowling, the Tolkien estate, the C.S. Lewis

Co.— are at least as widely read and as well paid as “serious” writers, many voices within the fantasy community persist in proclaiming themselves disregarded and confined to a ghetto of genre.

It is through the gap between fantasy and the fantastic that the problem slips in. There is now no difference between the general community practicing “literature,” in however global or restrictive a definition one gives that word, and the community that sets a value on the fantastic as an aesthetic. I am saying that no one in the general community today would stand up with F. R. Leavis or Edmund Wilson in defense of a strict canon of “realism.” Fifteen years ago there was a revulsion against narrative in general among post-structuralist critics, but that movement never targeted Fantasy, and the mood seems to have shifted. There is still realistic fiction being published by mainstream houses. But few in the community that values such fictions would claim that their procedure is the only one acceptable. In the wake of Harry Potter, the mainstream houses are eagerly looking for fantasy product; Harper Collins, for instance, which publishes Virginia Woolf, recently purchased all of C. S. Lewis’ Narnia titles and has been recruiting authors to write new Narnia adventures (without the Christian subtext)¹.

“Realistic” practice may be a rival, but it is surely not the enemy of Fantasy. The last century has seen consistent attempts to bring these two types of representation into partnership. Two major twentieth-century movements of the fantastic – surrealism and magic realism – both define themselves with respect to some canon of the real. René Crevel, Franz Kafka, Flann O’Brien, Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Toni Morrison all make use of the elements of mimetic realism to create fantastic stories within a recognizable, shared world. My own interest in trying to articulate this relationship was in fact largely sparked by a recent attempt to set the fantastic and the realistic into dialogue. The next-to-last number of the literary

magazine *Conjunctions*, guest-edited by Peter Straub and entitled “The New Wave Fabulists,”² attempts to set the two aesthetics in what one commentator, writing within the issue, calls “equipoise”³. The writers, most of them very well known within the Fantasy community, contributed pieces to be read and judged by the readers of what has been recognized for a decade as one of the best-edited literary journals in existence, one that promotes daring, innovative writing.

I have not seen any disparagement of “The New Wave Fabulists” from the “academic” side. Ironically, the critique has come from the Fantasy community. All the reviews I have seen express admiration for many or most of the stories but strong reservations about their genre-value⁴. These reviewers I take to represent the values of a Fantasy readership which may like both kinds of writing but holds the two aesthetics to be fundamentally incompatible. And since the larger community will not surrender mimetic realism as a value, the Fantasy community has taken on the role of a disregarded minority. Their champions have appropriated a term, “escapist,” used to demean subliterate genres and proudly fly the escapist flag in much the same provocative spirit that gays identify themselves as “queer.”

But homophobia is real. It has a voice that needs to be answered. The Fantasy-bashers – tweedy academics, snotty teachers, elitist editors, “modernists” fighting for the hegemony of “mimetic,” “realistic,” “serious” fiction, greedy to keep literature a preserve of obscurities and allusions that only they are trained to decode – these are chimeras. They are, I claim, precisely the monsters in a fantasy of victimization that the fantasy community seems unable to escape. I think genre fantasy has a value, even an acknowledged value as a literary kind, but not as a defensive refuge.

I have an interest in this topic on at least two accounts. First, I have a Ph.D. in English and make my living by teaching literature at the high-school level. My students are for the most part eager and capable readers with the confidence to tackle difficulty in poetry, in unfamiliar Englishes (Chaucer, Hurston), in texts rooted in different cultural or historical situations, in dense, allusive, “literary” texts – old books, strange books, hard books. I am the middleman. I work, therefore, on the ground that Ibn al-‘Arabi, the great Sufi teacher, calls the *barzakh*⁵, the intermediate imaginal realm. My work is to train the imaginations of my students – their *phantastikon*⁶ – to extend themselves outside the bounds of their own personal realities (and the sterile fantasies imposed on them by American commercial culture), to take off accurate images of other realities in the textual worlds within which we travel.

But I am a writer as well, and my work has the character of fantasy. It has been called “fabulist”; it has been appreciated within the generic frames of the “fuzzy” and the “transformation story.” My two novels are set in invented worlds, and all of the characters are real or invented animals. My books were published by an avant-garde literary press run by a poet whose life’s work has been to bring forward modernist and postmodern writing in all aspects, including many that the academic establishment has neglected. He publishes Gertrude Stein and Djuna Barnes. Coming from such a source and inflected (some might say infected) by such examples, my writing has not penetrated deep into the Fantasy community; yet inasmuch as it is fantasy it has left general readers in a state of doubt about my practice. They find it hard to place. In neither community is there a *phantastikon* prepared to receive the images my work generates. I could of course (at least in theory) alter my practice to satisfy the demands of either community by creating fictions legible within the expectations structured by genre. But the *barzakh* seems to be my terrain; therefore my business here must be to map the *barzakh*.

I want to consider the relation of two poetics, that of genre fantasy with that of twentieth-century Modernism. This particular comparison may seem odd, since genre fantasy is very much alive, whereas the literary and artistic practice of 1905-1960 is, as they say, history. But apologies for Fantasy regularly include an attack on Modernism. The names that come up in that attack, as the rivals or enemies of fantasy, as authors aversive because arrogant and obscure, are Henry James, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, and especially James Joyce. There exists a “Pre-Joycean Fellowship,” for instance. It consists of a group of Minneapolis-based writers who also call themselves the “Scribbles”⁷, and about whom it is speculated that

The Pre-Joycean Fellowship believes that literature can be both accessible and meaningful. They identify James Joyce as the first proponent of the idea that literature must be inaccessible to be meaningful. The term Pre-Joycean was coined in analogy to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood....⁸

although Stephen Brust, a member, says:

The best explanation for the Fellowship is: We exist to poke fun at the excesses of modern literature, while simultaneously mining it for everything of value.

On the other hand, as someone said, it is in large part a joke, and in another large part a way to start literary arguments.⁹

Well, jokes have a point and arguments an issue. If Joyce is taken, even jocularly, to represent the “excesses of modern literature,” then that part of modern literature that plays in bounds is going to look Victorian. It is Joyce’s use of story that bothers the Fantasy community. Joyce does not devalue Story – the *Odyssey*, after all, forms the narrative armature of *Ulysses*, and even *Finnegans Wake* has a story. But he does (by Fantasy standards) denature it, and he promotes other values that function more like poetry, carrying us into the language to find meaning, and less like narrative, which carries us along the language to find meaning.

Virtually all theorists of Fantasy define the genre with Story as its paramount value. In an essay published lately in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, Darrell Schweitzer begins by defining a fantasy in this way, as a story that is “made up, containing things which are not true, and which the author does not claim to be true.”¹⁰ Then he complains about the suppression of this sort of imagination in America:

We have, particularly in this country, what I call the Protestant Work Ethic of Literature, which holds that only Realism of the grimmest sort may [be] considered Real, Serious Literature, and everything else is frivolous, for children, or, worse yet, *genre*, which means ‘escapism’....

You were taught this by your English teacher in school....

As C. S. Lewis once said, the only people opposed to escapism are jailers.

So, cast wide the prison doors. Escape. Don’t be afraid. Throw off the official ideology of Henry James and the mainstream establishment and your high-school English teacher.¹¹

Here, in a literate essay by a well-read man (Schweitzer recommends Apuleius, Shakespeare, Swift, Kafka, and Borges to his students), printed in one of the best-respected journals within the fantasy/science fiction community, the lines are clearly drawn. Modernist, realist practice is committed to the “prison” of “official ideology” guarded by “the mainstream establishment and your high-school English teacher” and it is grim. But escape is possible into Fantasy, the realm of the fearlessly imaginative rebels.

It is an easy stand to take, one calculated to appeal to all the most deeply rooted antinomian, anti-intellectual tendencies in America, but it is a lie. Mr. Schweitzer was evidently scarred by some part of his education and projects his lasting pain upon his listeners and readers. But many people have learned something from their English teachers, and anyone who knows what ideological battlefields most university English departments have become will have to laugh at the idea that we have an official literary ideology or a mainstream establishment in this

country. On the other hand, a great deal of Fantasy writing is rigidly formulaic. Like so many apologists for fantasy, Mr. Schweitzer has set up a straw man. He has, to put it another way, created a fantasy in which he and students who may take his counsel are the heroes. It does not seem an honest fantasy; and the distinction between fantasies that hold some truth and good counsel and fantasies that do no more than flatter their consumers is one that we will have to address in due course.

In the meanwhile let's simply note that Fantasy very often defines itself by an attack on the past. Nobody complains about the practice of fiction writers working today. The reason must be that no one in the Fantasy community experiences more than genre-clash in reading standard literary fiction. In the work of Don DeLillo, to pick a name at random, there is no implicit critique of a fiction that privileges Story and introduces elements that have been made up. Contemporary fiction, so far from pretending to be a universal model of supreme value, has by and large accepted itself as a genre in its own right, one not too far removed from nonfiction, with a particular market niche and a repertoire of formulas easy to extract in writing workshops.

But the great Modernists and the critics who championed them, the adversaries that apologists for Fantasy usually take on, did make vast claims as to the superiority of their poetic. And they were attacking a Victorian practice within which Fantasy writing flourished. The centrality of narrative, of a story to be followed, is the pre-eminent value that Modernism challenges and that Fantasy desires to recover.

The value of Story is the criterion that, in a far more considered manner than we have yet seen, sets the difference between the two aesthetics. That difference between the communities that cleave to them may be expressed by means of terms introduced by John Clute, namely the "polder" and the "pale." Clute, I think, needs no introduction from me. He is one of the most

thoughtful and broadly read of the apologists for Fantasy and the co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, within which he has defined the devices and motifs of Fantasy so clearly and fully as comprehensively to map the genre. In the *Encyclopedia* Clute defines “polder,” a coinage of his own:

...[P]olders are defined as enclaves of toughened reality, demarcated by boundaries...from the surrounding world.... [T]hese boundaries are *maintained*;... A polder...is an *active* MICROCOSM, armed against the potential WRONGNESS of that which surrounds it, an anachronism *consciously* opposed to wrong time.¹²

Within the world of a fantasy story, polders are the special places with the coherence of a microcosm within which the energies and beauties, the intensities of experience of a larger universe, are concentrated. Polders then are epitomes protected against an outer world whose “wrongness”¹³ may be experienced as “thinning,” which is “a representation of the BONDAGE to the mortally real”:

In the structurally complete fantasy, thinning can be seen as a reduction of the healthy land to a parody of itself....

Thinning by be kept at bay, generally by diking it: physically through a polder of some sort, within which a toughened reality can be maintained through constant vigilance....¹⁴

“Mortal reality” is an aspect of time;

Surrounding the polder is a world whose effects may – all unconsciously – be inimical [including time].... Successful polders do not change. Polders change only when they are being devoured from without.¹⁵

Clute gives as an example Tom Bombadil’s enclave in the Old Forest, from Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. The forest itself can easily be seen to stand for “mortally real” time, the time of natural growth and death, and its adverse magic is summed up in its being the “Old” Forest, the center of whose malignancy is “Old Man Willow,” a tree “thinned” by a hollowness at heart. Since Modernism takes time as a central concern (Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner), it is easy to

see Clute's outer world, diseased and thinned to a parodic simulacrum, as that represented in Modernist fiction; here are the seeds of a tension if not an antagonism.

Clute does not say, but I will, that Fantasy as a whole, the genre of fantasy writing, sees itself within the world of literature as a polder, a defensive enclosure within which pleasure (if not reality) is protected from thinning. And Story is the dyke that actively maintains this polder, the magic that guarantees the microcosm. Clute does not expressly claim Fantasy as such an embattled stronghold; it is the Modernist critics, according to him, who have fenced themselves within a pale that shuts out as subliterate any writing that is "storyable." At least they refuse to acknowledge the storyable aspects of the texts they accept into their canon. Writing about Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," which in his view ought to be considered within the Fantasy subgenre of the Club Story, Clute decries

the critical exclusion of the fantastic from the organon of literature, an exclusion which fatally slights the centrality of story in any wider understanding of what it is we do when we tell. By creating a restrictive paling around the residue which is deemed real and therefore tellable, the literary critics of the past two centuries have created a canon so focused on the simple end of the spectrum of story that most of world literature has vanished out of ken.¹⁶

To me this seems a projection, the setting up of a straw man less caricatural than Schweitzer's but no more actual. The critical values Clute attributes to the "pale" are thirty years out of date. But I am willing to accept, heuristically, the picture suggested by the binary of *polder* and *pale* of two communities in a state of mutual distrust, if not active warfare, because then my task comes clear: to assess the reality of the difference and to take my turn in attempting to create a dialogue.

So I'll begin by showing that Fantasy and Modernism have at least one major goal in common: the revival of vital creative energies. At the head of his article on "thinning" Clute asserts that

Fantasy tales can be described, in part, as fables of recovery. What is being regained may be (a) the primal STORY that the surface tale struggles to rearticulate, (b) the TRUE NAME, or home, of the protagonist, (c) the health of the LAND... or indeed (d) the actual location of the land itself... But, although it is true most fantasy stories *finish*... it is also true that the happy endings of much fantasy derive from the notion that this is a *restoration*, that before the written story started there was a diminishment.¹⁷

J.R.R. Tolkien, whose fictions quite evidently practice a recovery, indeed a redemption of an entire world, repeats the essentials of this definition but is specific in stating, in his famous St. Andrews lecture on the fairy-story, that what is recovered is "old things":

[Old things are] commonly found embedded in fairy-stories [such as] relics of ancient customs..., beliefs once held.... [T]here remains still a point too often forgotten: that is the effect produced *now* by these old things in the stories as they are.

For one thing they are now old, and antiquity has an appeal in itself... Such stories...open the door on Other Time.

Recovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining...of a clear view...[of] things as we are (or were) meant to see them – as thing apart from ourselves...so that the things seen clearly may be freed from the drab blur of triteness or familiarity – from possessiveness.¹⁸

Almost exactly the same program, the reversal of the thinning of experience and the recovery of health and energy by attaching "old things," is voiced by two of the most eloquent surveyors of the Modernist aesthetic. Here is Guy Davenport from his essay "The Symbol of the Archaic":

...[I]n any characterization of the arts of our time we shall always want to say that if we have had a renaissance in the twentieth century, it has been a renaissance of the archaic....

What is most modern in our time frequently turns out to be the most archaic.... Picasso liked to say that modern art is what we have kept.... Archaic art... was springtime art in any culture....

Behind all this passion for the archaic, which is far more pervasive in the arts of our time than can be suggested here, is a longing for something lost, for energies, values, and certainties unwisely abandoned by an industrial age.... And if we ask why our artists have reached back to such archaic symbols to interpret the distress of mind and soul in our time, there are partial but not comprehensive answers. One reason, I suggest is the radical change in our sense of what is alive and what isn't.... The world that drove Ruskin and Pound mad has worsened in precisely the ways they said it would. Eliot's wasteland has extended its borders; Rilke's freakshow outside which the barker invites us to come in and see the genitals of money is a feature of every street.¹⁹

And here is how Hugh Kenner sums up the goals of the Modernists, the men of 1913:

To give over all that: to recover the gods, Pound had called it, or to free (said [Wyndham] Lewis) faculties 'older than the fish,' to achieve (Eliot) 'the new, the really new' which should be fit company for an Altamira bison, these had been the intentions of their vortex, dragging a dark world up into the light, forging an ecumenical reality where all times could meet without the romance of time,....²⁰

Pound famously called on poets to "make it new," and judging from these passages, I think we must say that "it" is the world, not just poetry. So the ends of Fantasy and Modernism are the same, but the worlds in which those ends are to be realized are different. For Fantasy, that world is the Secondary World of imagination, for Modernism it is the Primary, "real" world we live in, and of the two Modernism seems by far the more romantic.

Or megalomaniac: the drive to make the world new and recover the gods brought Pound at last to broadcast his redemptive economic vision from Mussolini's Rome throughout the Second World War. It was a vision whose antisemitism, though incidental from his own point of view, signifies how entitled Pound felt to say whatever he thought. He has not yet been forgiven. T.S. Eliot, though preaching in a quieter key, still moved too far away from that bison, which he witnessed in a cave in the Dordogne while backpacking in 1919²¹, and into a mandarin churchiness with its own ugly tinge of distaste for Jews and the working class. Readers from these groups have found a more attractive vision in William Carlos Williams, Charles Reznikoff,

Louis Zukofsky, and women have Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes, and Gertrude Stein to acknowledge the existence on the planet and the participation in its history of such beings as women.

So Modernism has some diversity, and its flaws may reflect the degree to which the Primary World, through sheer size and multiplicity, evades the efforts of imagination to encompass it. But the dream of bringing back the “old things” and of restocking the *phantastikon* with them is one that the lovers of Fantasy and the lover of the Modern may dream together.

In the end, what essential differences divide Fantasy from Modernism? What is the value of Story, and what is the nature of Fantasy that brings it to such insistence upon Story? How do the poetics of Modernism and Fantasy comment reciprocally, and how mutually exclusive are they of necessity? These are the questions I mean to address. I have begun by looking at the hostility between the polder of Fantasy and the pale of Modernism and hope to account for it by developing, in my next essay, the fable of the Wounded Reader. Then I want, in the essay after that, to juxtapose the map as the emblem of Fantasy with collage as the “map” of Modernism, in order to understand the real differences between these aesthetics. Then I will try to verify an analogy between two relationships, that of Fantasy with Modernism to that of fantasy with dream, hopeful that I can show that in either case health grows out of the connection, not the distinction. Literature benefits from being freed from restrictive zoning; I hope to suggest some ways of reconceiving the map of it.

My authorities are very diverse: John Clute, Orson Scott Card, J.R.R. Tolkien, Rosemary Jackson, Ursula K. LeGuin, Robert Scholes, Ezra Pound and his commentators, Walter Benjamin, Ibn al-‘Arabi and his commentators, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Guy Debord and

others among the Situationist International, Georges Perec and others in the Oulipo²². I plan to quote from these authors and to footnote my sources, at the risk also of intimidating or boring readers accustomed to a lively flow of personal opinion.

For it is a fact that for the most part the apologists for Fantasy do not quote and do not footnote. One true sign of Fantasy's embattled posture in the world of literature is the willingness of its champions to preach to the choir and the existence of a choir willing to accept their preachments uncritically. I, an unknown with divided loyalties, do not enjoy such *ex cathedra* authority – happily. Quoting and footnoting is the only honest method I can practice in order to fulfill my goal of bringing many different voices into dialogic interaction.

It will be my next task to argue that the concentration of meaning, of experience, of “thickened reality” within a restricted area of the field of literature – whether the polder of genre or the pale of expertise – is the action of a wounded reader.

Notes to The Polder and The Pale

1. Doreen Carvajal, "Marketing 'Narnia' Without a Christian Lion," *The New York Times*, June 3, 2001, Sunday Late Edition - Final, Section 1, Page 1, Column 4. See also Gregg Easterbrook, "In Defense of C. S. Lewis," *The Atlantic Monthly* (October, 2001) <<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2001/10/easterbrook.htm>> and <<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/arts/al0103.html>>.
2. *Conjunctions:39, The New Wave Fabulists*, ed. Peter Straub (Annandale-on-Hudson: Bard College, 2002). This work will hereinafter be referred to as *TNWF*.
3. John Clute, "Beyond the Pale." *TNWF* 420-33.
4. See, for example the reviews by Paul Kincaid ("What Are The New Wave Fabulists?" *New York Review of Science Fiction* 15:7, March 2003), Steve Carper (<http://www.tangentonline.com/reviews/anthoreview.php3>, posted January 14, 2003), Evelyn C. Leeper (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/4824/rev-s.htm#conj39>), David Soyka ("A Rose by Any Other Name?" http://www.locusmag.com/2003/Reviews/Soyka03_Fabulists.html Thursday 13 March 2003), and William Thompson (<http://www.sfsite.com/02b/cj146.htm>). Here are some representative comments:

This collection...suffers from a crisis of identity. Despite its *New Wave* identification, much of the work contributed here is oddly muted in its use of fantastical elements, certain stories...incorporating little that could be called fabulation, possessing characteristics more readily identifiable as mainstream than anything remotely approximating fantasy or science fiction.... (Thompson)

The stories here no more speak for the genre of fantasy than any random collection of current work, but they let light shine upon talent never properly acknowledged in the wider world. (Carper)

I suppose I will join the parade of reviewers who say that CONJUNCTIONS: 39 (THE NEW FABULISTS) is a good anthology, but that I'm somewhat confused by the title.... [T]he stories here are merely what a wide variety of authors are currently writing in a wide variety of styles. A more honest title might have been "The Many Faces of Fantastic Literature Today", but I suppose "The New Wave Fabulists" sounds more academic.... Do I recommend this anthology? As a look at what a range of authors with some connection to the speculative fiction field are doing, it's certainly worth while, but one could argue that if all you want are good fantasy stories, you should buy [another anthology] (Leeper)

...[W]e are cued, by the title, to expect stories that use the devices and metaphors of fantasy to produce a sort of impressionistic realism that will teach us something about our world or ourselves and that will in some way shake up the whole genre of fantasy.... 'Impressionistic realism' certainly wins out over fantasy: half of these stories are not actually fantasy, or count as fantasy only by some half-hearted nod toward familiar fantasy devices rather than a necessary narrative impulse. (Kincaid)

5. I will develop this concept, key to my thinking, more fully later in this essay. I first learned about it from Stefania Pandolfo's ethnographic study of a village in Morocco, *Impasse of the Angels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Her book led me on to the major discussion in English, William C. Chittick's *The Sufi Path of Knowledge. Ibn al 'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).
6. Ezra Pound revived this term from classical Stoic discourse. I quote Hugh Kenner quoting Pound: "...the phantastikon, a precarious mental state 'circumvolved' about its possessor like a soap bubble 'reflecting sundry patches of the macrosmos.' 'Shall I,' he asks in the abandoned version of Canto I,

Confuse my own phantastikon,
Or say the filmy shell that circumscribes me
Contains the actual sun;

confuse the thing I see

With actual gods behind me?

(Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971], 417)

7. See J[ohn] C[lute], "Scribbles," *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, ed. John Clute and John Grant (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 845, col. 2. This work will hereinafter be referred to as *Ency. Fant.*

8. <<http://stahl.bau.tubs.de/~hildeb/sandman/annotations/sandman.31.shtml>>

9. <<http://zelazny.corrupt.net/brust.txt>>

10. "The Uses of Fantasy," *New York Review of Science Fiction* 15:7, March 2003, p. 14, col. 1. Originally a speech delivered at The Write Stuff, the Greater Lehigh Valley Writers Conference, April 28, 2001

11. Schweitzer, 14, col. 2

12. "Polder," *Ency. Fant.* 772, col. 2

13. "Wrongness," *Ency. Fant.* 1038, col. 2

14. "Thinning," *Ency. Fant.* 942-3, col. 1

15. *Ency. Fant.* 773, col. 1

16. John Clute, "Beyond the Pale," *TNWF* 427

17. *Ency. Fant.* 942, col. 1

18. J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," The Andrew Lang Lecture at St. Andrews University, 1938; rpt. in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine, 1966). 31-2, 57.

19. Guy Davenport, "The Symbol of the Archaic," a lecture read at the University of Louisville as part of the conference on Twentieth-Century Literature, 1974; rpt. in *The Geography of the Imagination* (Boston: Godine, 1997). 22-8. The Rilke reference is to the tenth of the *Duino Elegies*.

20. Kenner, 552. The "Altamira bison" refers to the famous neolithic cave-paintings of southern France, the ones Eliot actually visited, and northern Spain, where Picasso saw the bison.

21. Kenner, 333.

22. The Oulipo, an acronym for *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle* (workshop for potential literature), is a French literary group founded by a writer, Raymond Queneau, and a mathematician, François Le Lionnais, to develop a method of composition governed by constraints, or what a mathematician would call algorithms. To give one idea of their practice, Queneau wrote a text called *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (*One Hundred Thousand Billion Poems*) by writing ten sonnets, each of whose fourteen lines could be transposed to the same location in any other sonnet. This procedure yields 10^{14} possible different sonnets. The Pompidou Center in Paris used to have, may still, a computer that would randomly recombine lines at the touch of the button, then spitting out what would in all likelihood be an original sonnet by one of France's best-known writers. The sheer delight of these procedures ought to recommend them to readers of Fantasy. A good introduction is Warren L. Motte, Jr., *Oulipo. A Primer of Potential Literature* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).