

1. My seatmate on a recent plane was plainly not enjoying herself and I said "You don't seem to be enjoying yourself" and she said "I'm not, I'm just enduring the trip--as my father said before I left, 'Think of yourself as a package, and you'll soon be delivered'" and I said "Isn't there anything you could think of yourself as that would help you enjoy, instead of only enduring, the trip?" We are what we think of ourselves as, and what we think of ourselves as is our choice and therefore our responsibility.

2. This thinksheet asks you to use your imagination, as much as may be needed, to think of yourself as story-hearer/teller. Loree and I have just returned (Sept/76) from 15 days of total immersion in Eire with one of the last generation of Celtic storytellers whose native language is Celtic ["Irish"], not English. Gerry Reil grew up an impoverished peasant in the extreme West of Ireland, where Gaelic is still the first language for the older generations. In the wee villages, the second most honored visitor--the first being the priest--was the story-teller ["seΔΔcaid e," new Gaelic sp. "seanachaidhe"--Eng. pronun. "shawnachree" but Eng. sp. "seanachaoi"]. A parapatetic, he would arrive in a given home of an evening, be given the best food and best seat by the fire, and regale the company with tales of the folk, heroic and sad and joyful; and fairy stories of the wee folk ["leprechauns"]; and Bible stories, often interwoven with the other tales and stories...the process of mythopoesis [the art and practice of myth-making, interweaving (as Celtic basketwork on high crosses and the Book of Kells) fact/fantasy, objective/subjective, unconscious/conscious, sacred/profane, past/present, supernatural/natural, true/false].

3. Paul's letter to the Irish (in the sense that the Galatians and the Irish are one people, the Celts--of all people now alive, the western Irish being more like Paul's Galatians than are any other people) reveals the Galatians' gullibility, or at least belief-proneness, "going to another gospel" (1.6), retrogressing to Celtic paganism ("beings who are not gods...weak and pitiful ruling spirits," to which you can become "slaves all over again," paying "special attention to certain days, months, seasons, and years"--4.8-10), yielding to Judaizers (4.21ff) and to dionysianism (5.13-15,19-21). All peoples are open to the story-teller, but especially peoples of the open temperament of these Galatians-Irish! This is important for me as human, Christian, as biblical scholar, and as [by the broadest understanding of "Celtic"] Celtic in all eight of my greatgrandparents. [Nora Chadwick, *THE CELTS* (Penguin/74): 73 ("the Irish, the 'Scots' of early record"), 84 (the Irish, "the nearest...to the original Celtic people" and language, for Ireland was "left behind by time" and is "extremely conservative"), 140 ("the most widespread entertainment of the Celts probably was that derived from story-telling and talking, accompanied by feasting and drinking. These pleasures appear to have been enjoyed by all grades of society")].

4. During the Chicago days of Early Christian environmental determinism, Shirley Jackson Case began one of his books thus: "The sky hung low over the ancient Mediterranean world." The sentence kept coming back to me in Ireland, where the sky hangs low and the two worlds are separated by an osmotic membrane--or, better, by Irish lace [e.g., in the blessing the shawnachree dismissed us with at the end of the 15 days: "...and when it comes to the end of time, may you be in heaven at least half an hour before the devil finds out that you're dead"]. Just across the Irish Sea are an unimaginative folk one of whose number not long ago stupidly wrote a book about God being not "up there," and claimed that this was [in his wife's words] HONEST TO GOD. So the Western world's imagination failed, and is now being swamped by the East with its story-telling.

5. Teaching at U. of Hawaii, I found that the one mythic language all my students [Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, and all the other great religions] had was Middle Earth [J.R.R. Tolkien, the lingua franca!]. In *THE TOLKIEN READER* [Ballantine/66], T. says the Gospels have the greatest story with (71f) "the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe" [=the sudden, joyous turn by which grace delivers, making the story "good news": "This story begins and ends in joy."] [And see *June/76 JAAR*: "Bibl. Narrative, Myth, and Fairy Stories."]