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THE REMARKABLY broad and steady popularity of Andre Norton's science fiction is a largely unexamined phenomenon. Indeed, so silent have the science fiction critics been that any discussion of Norton must begin with comments on her neglect.

The sheer number of Norton's books and their impressive sales by themselves should have sufficed to attract notice. Her first novel, *The Prince Commands*, appeared in 1934 before the author was twenty-one. Her initial venture into sf came in the 1930s. By now she has produced more than 75 books, about two dozen pieces of short fiction, and edited six anthologies. The majority of her output is sf, but the list of her writings also includes historical, mystery, suspense, and gothic novels. Her books have sold by the millions here and abroad. They have been frequently reprinted and reissued. Three of her works have been honored with Hugo Award nominations: *Star Hunter* (1961), *Witch World* (1963), and "Wizard's World" (1967). A 1966 *Analog* popularity poll listed her as eleventh of seventeen all-time favorite authors. She is, in short, a "saleable name" as an author of sf.

The "young adult" classification given to Norton's sf novels for trade purposes partly explains, but does not justify, their critical neglect—Robert A. Heinlein's juveniles have not been ignored. Moreover, although her

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hardcover editions are usually packaged for the teenage or young adult market, the paperbacks are directed to all ages. (DAW Books even released her children's book *Dragon Magic* as part of its general list.) But her work has sometimes been dismissed as naive. It would be fairer to describe it as unpretentious.

Many of today's sf readers grew up on Norton, yet she has never become the object of a cult as have Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert E. Howard, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Marion Zimmer Bradley. Nor do personal ties stimulate interest. Norton, a retired Cleveland librarian now living in Florida, does not indulge in self-advertisement. Her public appearances have been rare and her contacts with either fans or fellow professionals have been private.

Finally, instead of reaping some benefit from the current vogue for women writers, she has drawn petty criticism for using a masculine pen name. The critics who have made this charge fail to realize that "Andre" is now Alice Mary Norton's legal name. Commercial pressures existing in the historical and suspense genres when her career began dictated this pen name. (Norton also used the pseudonym "Andrew North" on three early sf books because of simultaneous editorial ties to the publisher.) Once the label was established it would have been imprudent to change it.

Overall, little attention has been given to Norton for her exceptional entertainment skills, nor have the characteristics of her work been explored. Color, emotional appeal, and romanticism are the bases of her

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adventure tales' popularity. Their alien, far future settings do not date easily. Emphasis on soft rather than hard science makes them more humane and comprehensible. There is a special—and addicting—flavor to a Norton book.

This flavor can be analyzed in terms of Norton's distinctive motifs and themes. First of all, it should be noted that she reiterates certain backgrounds as well as ideas. Repetition of institutions (Patrol, Service, Combines, Thieves' Guild, Free Traders, the Dipple) and planet names (Korwar, Warlock, Sargol, Astra) form a set of interlocking cross-references so that the majority of her science fiction novels occur in the same loosely-structured imaginary universe. Short series of two, three, or four directly related books fall within the overall pattern (e.g., *Storm Over Warlock*, *Ordeal in Otherwhere*, and *Forerunner Foray* constitute the Warlock series), but this is in no sense an organized future history.

Not surprisingly, major motifs reflect her personal interests: parapsychology, animals, archeology, folklore, anthropology, and history. Norton often describes psi powers or alien sciences that function like magic (*Merlin's Mirror*, *Key Out of Time*, *Android at Arms*, "Wizard's World"). This allows her to blend fantasy with science fiction. She treats affinity bonds and telepathic links between humans and animals as well as among humans (*Star Rangers*, *The X Factor*, Time Trader series, Warlock series, Beast Master series, Moonsinger series). And the animals are often as intelligent as

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the humans (*Catseye, The Zero Stone, Uncharted Stars, Iron Cage, and Breed to Come*, which was dedicated to her own pets).

Norton likes to equip her alien worlds with archeologies. Recurring mention of the Forerunners, a vanished Elder Race, brings the antique and the futuristic together (*Lord of Thunder, Forerunner Foray*). Believing that objects acquire historical impressions, Norton uses artifacts as keys to adventure (*Forerunner Foray, Dragon Magic, The Zero Stone*).

She applies her knowledge of anthropology and folklore to create vivid primitive cultures. She has put Amerindian protagonists and settings to good use (*The Sioux Spaceman, The Defiant Agents, Fur Magic*, the Beast Master series). *Android at Arms* is an unprecedented sf application of African culture. (She was depicting blacks sympathetically as far back as 1952 in *Star Man's Son*.)

Time travel, interdimensional gates, and parallel worlds are favorite devices of Norton's (*Here Abide Monsters, Time Traders* series, *Crosstime* series). One of her original innovations is the alternative histories of alien planets (*Star Gate, Perilous Dreams*).

Her paramount themes are: the freedom and integrity of the individual (*The Defiant Agents*), the perils of technology (Janus series, *Star Hunter, Star Rangers*), and temptations of elite power groups (*Ice Crown, Warlock* series).

These concepts and themes are always incorporated into the framework of a heroic story. Norton's plots

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follow the humble branch of Joseph Campbell's monomyth in which a deprived, powerless, unwanted misfit who is usually young, sometimes an orphan or cripple, struggles against enormous odds to find a place for himself. At the same time, his deeds also benefit others. (*Night of Masks* and *Dread Companion* exemplify this for a boy and girl respectively.) The adventure is usually structured in chase-capture-escape-ordeal sequences. Success, in the final confrontation, often hinges on some past moral choice, kindness, or an accidentally-discovered talisman. This maturation formula is obviously ideal for juvenile novels, but its appeal is by no means limited to one age group, for it is a fine means of enlisting audience identification and sympathy.

To Norton, the *story* is always uppermost. She modestly describes herself as "a very staid teller of old-fashioned stories" and cites the influence of H. Rider Haggard, Talbot Mundy, and the like upon her work. As a writer she is fascinated by situations rather than words. Connoisseurs of clever metaphors will have to seek their quarry elsewhere.

Her colorful alien worlds are rendered as series of impressions. They are never totally explained, and thus they create a pleasing ambiguity, a sense of mystery, which stimulates the reader's imagination. A Norton story leads one down a glittering road but does not permit distracting ventures down byways glimpsed in passing.

The dominant note of her wonder-tales is wholesomeness. Hers is a hopeful, ecumenical vision of different

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racess, cultures, life-forms cooperating so that the good may prevail.

The epitome of Norton's sf is her acclaimed *Witch World* series. The first volume, *Witch World*, was originally inspired by research on the medieval crusaders' kingdoms overseas. It was finally published in paperback by Ace Books in 1963 after several fruitless years' search for a publisher. The fantasy market was depressed in those days before the Tolkien boom, yet *Witch World* was so warmly received it won a Hugo nomination for best novel of the year. Seven more novels and eleven shorter works have been completed thus far in this growing series as Norton fills in the details of her world. (Readers are urged to consult the table at the end of this article to sort out geographical and historical relationships.)

The *Witch World*—a descriptive, not a proper designation—is an Earth-like alien planet where magic works. It is far removed in time and space from our globe, yet linked to it and others by interdimensional "gates." Past intrusions through those gates have peopled the world with a variety of human cultures superimposed on primordial non-human ones. These layers of peoples stretching farther and farther back into fabulous antiquity is reminiscent of the legendary Irish *Book of Invasions* and real British history.

On the eastern continent dwells the Old Race of Estcarp, a dark-haired, dwindling breed ruled by a

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Council of Witches and, to the north and south, their foes, the rude younger nations of Alizon and Karsten. The Old Race is in the position of Britons beset by Anglo-Saxons and Normans. These peoples plus the Nordic Sulcarmen of the Western Ocean are at a medieval stage of development, but the Spartan Falconers of the south and the Vupsall of the southeast are far more primitive. (The latter tribe resembles a blend of Plains Indian and Scythian.)

East of Estcarp lies Escore, the forgotten original homeland of the Old Race. It is inhabited by a variety of fascinating creatures: the Green People of mixed Old and superhuman blood whose nature magic controls vegetation; the amphibious Krogan and Merfays; the reptilian Vrang; the avian Flannan; the subterranean Thas; the cervine Renthan; the lupine Gray Ones; the Mosswives; and a whole bestiary of bizarre fauna. The odder species resulted from genetic experiments by powerful magicians long since departed for other planes of existence.

Westward, overseas from Estcarp, is High Hallack, a mountainous land held by ordinary humans modeled on medieval Anglo-Normans. They are suspicious of magic and wary of the enchanted relics left behind by the Old Ones. It is implied that these Old Ones are akin to the vanished adepts of Escore, but on this continent most have retreated to Arvon, their own spell-guarded country in the north. This development resembles the withdrawal of the Sidhe in Ireland. Popular religion in both High Hallack and Arvon centers on personified

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natural forces who may have originally been superhuman beings—older Old Ones.

Norton's chief inspiration in these books has been British myth and folklore: the perilous quests and other-world journeys; the mystic signs and names; the charms and superstitions; the blurring of barriers between man and nature; the mountains and wasteland studded with mysterious towers, ruined strongholds, and ancient megaliths.

However, despite the British flavor of the Witch World's magic, the theory behind the practice comes from other sources. Norton's "power" is surely an example of *mana*, the Melanesian term for the essence of the "really real" (the same concept is found under other names among the natives of Oceania, North America, and Africa). Like *mana*, power grants the ability to function. It is present in all that exists but is especially manifest in anything strong, holy, or extraordinary. Its intensity varies. Certain people, places, or things are more richly endowed with it than others. In addition to power that a gifted person can tap in performing magic (weaving illusions, foretelling the future, reading minds, healing injuries, and so forth), there are also The Powers, beings possessing fabulous degrees of essence who can respond when summoned. One such is Gunnora, the fertility goddess of High Hallack, who lingers as a merciful presence in her shrines.

Norton emphasizes the mysterious and erratic nature of power. In Estcarp, the ability to wield it exists only

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in females and is apparently conferred by a recessive gene. Witches undergo years of rigorous training before receiving their jewel of office. They remain virgins for life because they believe that loss of their virginity would deprive them of their power. (This is not strictly true, as Jaelithe demonstrates, but is the result of politically-motivated conditioning.) Other general rules of magic hold all over the Witch World. Power may fail when it is most ardently needed. An adept must recuperate after excessive usage. Power can be lost or ruined by abuse. Having power begets the desire for more (only the most moral and carefully disciplined practitioners can withstand this insidious temptation). Too great a concentration of power is inherently dangerous—visitations by the Light can be as damaging as those by the Dark.

Such is the background against which Norton spins her tales of the Witch World.

Witch World is the story of Simon Tregarth, a disgraced American army officer driven outside the law after World War II. He escapes certain death by passage through an interdimensional gate, in this case the Arthurian Seige Perilous. (The author hints at earlier links between the worlds in Arthurian times, and it is Simon's Cornish blood that qualifies him for the Witch World.) He arrives in Estcarp and joins the Old Race's death-struggle against the combined might of Alizon, Karsten, and the Kolder. The Kolder are technologically-

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advanced but utterly inhuman invaders from another world—alien Nazis, as it were. They are bent on exterminating the Old Race by war or by massacre because they cannot mentally enslave anyone of that blood. Simon's understanding of technology and his latent talent for the power make him a uniquely effective champion against the Kolder. Aided by Jaelithe, a young witch; Koris, an exiled lord; and Loyse, a run-away heiress, he drives the enemy from their stronghold and saves Estcarp temporarily from the Kolder menace.

Web of the Witch World completes the account of the Kolder war and ties up loose ends from the preceding novel. Simon has married, Jaelithe and thereby cost her her witch's jewel. However, they learn how to exercise a new form of power together. Using this, they discover the overseas base of the Kolder and permanently seal the invaders' gate.

Three Against the Witch World introduces the next generation of Tregarths and is told from the viewpoint of Kyllan, the eldest. Gratitude for the victory won by Simon and Jaelithe does not soften the attitude of the Witches towards them. They cannot accept a male with the power and despise Jaelithe for cancelling her witch's vows. The Tregarths plan to rear their children—Kyllan the warrior, Kemoc the seer, and Kaththea the sorceress—away from the Witches' influence. Both parents disappear while investigating new threats to Estcarp, and the triplets are brought up by foster parents. Kaththea is forced into witch training, but her brothers are able to rescue her because of the unique psychic bond they

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all share. The young Tregarths flee over the accursed eastern mountains and come into Escore. Their coming disturbs the long-standing stalemate there between the forces of Light and Shadow, but at the same time also provides the means to cleanse the land.

In *Warlock of the Witch World*, Kaththea suffers an acute case of *hubris* (overconfidence) and falls prey to the designs of Dinzil, an evil magician posing as a servant of the Light. Kemoc relates his struggle to save her. (His adventures were suggested by the story of Childe Roland and the Dark Tower.) He succeeds with the help of Orsya, a Krogan girl, but Kaththea forfeits her power for her sins.

Sorceress of the Witch World is Kaththea's story. She attempts to return to Estcarp for healing but on the way she is separated from her family and captured by the savage Vupsall. She is forced to become their tribal seeress but fails to foresee an enemy attack. She manages to escape the carnage and passes through another gate into a sterile world inhabited by remnants of a Kolder-like civilization. There she rescues the gate's fashioner, a might adept from Escore's past, and solves the mystery of her parents' disappearance.

Meanwhile, on the opposite continent, another cycle of adventures has been taking place.

"Dream Smith" occurs at an undetermined point in High Hallack's past. It is the poignant love story of a maimed silversmith and a crippled heiress united by the Old Ones' magic. (A similar enchanted instrument appears in Norton's non-series juvenile, *Octagon Magic*.)

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After Estcarp defeated the Kolder, the forces of Alizon turn their attention elsewhere and invade High Hallack. They cause immense destruction but are eventually repulsed after years of bitter warfare. The psychotic ruthlessness of the aggressors is again reminiscent of Nazism and the defenders suffer as badly as the Dutch did in World War II. The next three stories are set during or after the conflict.

"Dragon Scale Silver" is based on the outraged fairy bride folktale motif. Elys and Elyn are the twin children of Estcarp refugees. Elys, the daughter, is treated like a boy and trained as both warrior and Wise Woman. She helps the people of her village survive the Alizon invasion and rescues her brother from the near-fatal spell of a female Dark Old One.

Year of the Unicorn retells "Beauty and the Beast." It is narrated by Gillan, an orphaned Estcarp girl who has grown up in a convent in High Hallack. She marries the Were Rider Herrel, one of the Old Ones who had aided in the war against Alizon. She and her husband endure terrible physical and psychic ordeals because of his kinfolk's hatred. They finally prevail and go to make their home in Arvon.

The fantasy gothic "Amber out of Quayth" is notable for its wonderful romanticized descriptions of amber stones. This story describes the postwar marriage of convenience between the unwanted daughter of an impoverished noble house and a Dark Old One. On learning her husband's true nature Ysmay helps the rightful

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lord and lady of the castle he usurped free themselves and punish him.

The major concerns of the *Witch World* series exemplify all the characteristics of Norton's work described earlier. All her misfit heroes and heroines find appropriate niches after enduring grave perils and making some kind of exodus. Their personal struggles mirror issues confronting their societies.

War has thrown Estcarp, Escore, and High Hallack into chaos while Arvon is beginning to feel the first stirrings of future conflict. Old orders are under attack on every hand. New social balances are being struck after much shaking and leveling. The violence of the changes, the stakes involved, and the consequent reversals of fortune border on the apocalyptic.

Simon Tregarth "was always a man standing apart watching others occupied with the business of living" (*Witch World*, p. 169). Marrying Jaelithe gives him psychological wholeness but at the cost of dislocating her. The special power they share together sets them apart from the accepted order in Estcarp. It is implied that they will find the situation there more favorable after returning from exile.

Their triple birth would be enough to make the Tregarth children curiosities in Estcarp. They flee their homeland to protect their shared powers from the control of the Witches. Ignorance and imprudence hamper them initially in Escore, but they eventually establish new homes there with suitable mates.

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Gillan, and to a milder degree Elys, are marked off from their associates by blood, personality, and talents but are fortunate enough to find understanding men.

The handicapped lovers in "Dream Smith" and unwanted Ysmay in "Amber Out of Quayth" must leave the familiar world to find happiness.

A Norton protagonist is not looking for a place to be comfortable but for a place to be free. She or he will suffer the sharpest agonies, cut ties to home and kindred, wrestle with fate itself in order to find freedom. The author admits her fascination with this theme. As she says, "Loss of control over one's body or mind seems to be the ultimate in horror for me." Throughout the series, forces based on freely bonded unions vanquish those that depend on the compulsion of body, mind, or spirit.

The Kolder are the first such threat encountered. Their monstrous science can turn men into automatons or control selectively the wills and bodies of the living. At the climax of *Web of the Witch World*, Simon and Jaelithe act in concert to take over the Kolder leader's mind and do unto him as he had done unto others. *Sorceress of the Witch World* parallels this when the Kolder-like villains who had turned Hilarion into a living computer component and attempt to harness Kaththea are bested by a psychic gestalt.

Magic rather than technology is the chief hazard in Escore and High Hallack. The mind barrier between Estcarp and Escore has affected the Old Race for centuries, but the Tregarths are able to penetrate it and

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encourage others to do the same. Illusions—a stallion for Kyllan, a woman for Elyn—are deadly lures. There are spells which bind victims to one place and haunted sites from which there is no escape. Dinzil regards all other beings as his tools. His magic deforms the body while disfiguring the soul, but self-sacrificing cooperation by Kemoc and Orsyia annihilates him.

The note of mutual support as a shield against evil is sounded again and again in this series. Gillan's Were Rider in-laws try to destroy her because they cannot control her mind, but she and Herrel reinforce each other and survive. No Norton protagonist finishes his adventures alone. He always finds loved ones with whom he can form a corporate identity that is stronger than any of its parts.

Social pressures pose a different sort of danger to personal integrity. The series emphasizes those pertaining to marriage. Women are reduced to political bargaining counters (*Witch World*, *Web of the Witch World*, "Dream Smith," *Year of the Unicorn*) or marry in haste to escape unhappy environments ("Amber Out of Quayth") or are denied marriage to suit the plans of others (*Three Against the Witch World*). Institutionalized female virginity among the Witches and seasonal male promiscuity among the Falconers taint those societies because they deprive some members of free choice.

Of course the most extreme example of dictated sex is rape. This is the method of choice for neutralizing a witch's power. Jaelithe, Loyse, and Kaththea are rescued

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from rapists, but Gillan saves herself. Women in "Legacy from Sorn Fen" and "The Toads of Grimmerdale" (not reprinted here) are less fortunate. There is also the multi-level seduction attempt in *Sorceress of the Witch World*, beguilement of men in "Dragon Scale Magic," and a love charm in *Witch World*. The prevalence of attempted rape in this series has to be considered more than a realistic presentation of medieval conditions. It is the author's loudest cry against compulsion..

Norton treats the impact of advanced technology as a rape of reality. She shudders in disgust at the dreary, sterile tyranny of the Kolder. They are masters of death-in-life, but living powers outlast minds welded to soulless machines. *Sorceress of the Witch World* treats a comparable situation with heavy irony when the Kolder-like leader boasts of his superiority to cyborgs: "They wrought worse than they thought, those builders of towers, giving themselves to the machines. We knew better! Man—he beat one fist into the palm of his other hand—'Man exists, man abides!'" (p. 142). He, too, is overcome by magic. Alizon's technology likewise fails in High Hallack. The enchantments of the Were Riders are more effective weapons for the defenders than borrowed Kolder war engines are for the invaders.

Even when survival is not at issue, the Old Race has its reservations about mechanical devices. How might the use of such things affect the user? Even wielding a simple spring-operated dart gun "meant careful preparation in thinking patterns. We could not ally with a machine!" (*Sorceress*, p. 126). Norton's utopia is the

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Green Valley in Escore where the fundamental powers of nature reign supreme.

The conception behind the series lets the author describe both the mad scientist and his gothic prototype, the overambitious magician. The villainous alchemist Hylle in "Amber Out of Quayth" combines traits of both. Kaththea compares the menacing alien scientist to her false lover: "He had taken Dinzil's road, seduced by the thought of the victory so badly needed, or by the smell of power, which, as he handled it, became more and more sweet and needful" (*Sorceress*, p. 143).

The lust for ever-greater occult learning is a corrosive temptation for the Wise. Some adepts in Escore succumbed: "A handful of seekers after knowledge experimented with Powers they thought they understood. And their discoveries, feeding upon them in turn, altered subtly spirit, mind, and sometimes even body. Power for its results was what they sought, but then, inevitably, it was Power for the sake of Power alone" (*Three Against*, p. 130). As a result, Escore became an ecological disaster area, a polluted country infested with loathsome animals and plants. (Arvon once faced a similar crisis but dealt with it more efficiently and suffered no grave harm.)

The power's attractions can ensnare lesser folk as well. *The Crystal Gryphon* and *The Jargoan Pard* (both not included here) involve people of limited abilities turned thoroughly evil by their craving for magical expertise. The people of High Hallack ordinarily shun works of the Old Ones because those who meddle are

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usually harmed. Smelting ancient metal proves calamitous in "Dream Smith" but is safely accomplished by a forewarned craftsman in "Dragon Scale Silver."

Kaththea, misled by a Faustian man, is a novel example of a Faustian woman. She consistently overrates her skills in *Three Against the Witch World* and uses her powers recklessly. Her desire for more power at any price nearly drives her to commit heinous crimes and costs her the use of her original gifts. Her behavior is contrasted with Orsya's admirable curiosity and boldness.

The least discussed aspect of the Witch World series is its feminist viewpoint. All the stories reprinted here chronicle the struggles of independent women. The consistently unflattering portraits of conventional women make the virtues of the nonconformists shine more brightly.

For example, Jaelithe is differentiated first by having a witch's power and then by surrendering it. Afterwards she does not settle for cozy domesticity but accompanies Simon to war as vice-warder of Estcarp's southern border. One might regard Jaelithe as a career woman who leaves her children in day care while pursuing her business interests. (Her substitute is a Falconer woman who rebelled against the brutal laws of that people.) The image of Jaelithe saluting her children and riding away to rescue her husband is strikingly gallant.

An even less conventional heroine is Jaelithe's friend Loyse, the drab, scrawny daughter of a lusty baron.

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Oppression has shaped her into a creature of immense determination and fortitude. "Happiness! Loyse had no conception of that. She wanted only her freedom" (*Witch World*, p. 89). She abhors the usual trappings of femininity and is hypersensitive about her independence. As she warns her future husband: "I fight with my own sword and wield my own shield in this or any other battle" (*Witch World*, p. 203). Her neuroses do not hamper her effectiveness in action.

The contrast between Loyse and the coolly wanton beauty of Aldis, her first husband's mistress, is the most extreme example of a Norton heroine's typical predicament. Norton's heroines are never especially beautiful—their attractiveness lies in character and personality—and they often suffer at the hands of comelier ladies. The author mocks foolish men like the brothers of Elys and Ysmay who fall prey to empty charms.

The *Witch World*'s intrepid and resourceful heroines are superior to their men in some ways. Kyllan is simply not on the same level as his superhuman bride (unless we are to see in their union a happier version of Diana and Endymion). Kemoc lacks certain of Orsya's occult and physical attributes, but they make an even match overall.

Norton emphasizes marriage as an equal partnership: "Between us there must never be ruler or ruled," says Hilarion to Kaththea (*Sorceress*, p. 217). The serene companionship between Simon and Jaelithe illustrates this marriage of equals splendidly. This is wholly unlike the utilitarian policy of Dinzil toward Kaththea and of

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Hylle toward Ysmay. It likewise offers a healthy corrective to the antimarital prejudices of the Witches and Falconers and to the plain misogyny of the Kolder.

Expectations of individual men and women clash in "Dragon Scale Silver," a feminist variation on fantasy conventions. Proud Elys the shieldmaiden is annoyed by a soldier's offer to accompany her in her quest for her brother. She feels that Jervon would prove a hindrance because he lacks magical talent, but he manages to resist the enticements of the Dark Old One who had beguiled Elys' brother and lends his strength to break the spell. Elyn is unappreciative of Elys' efforts because he is ashamed of the lust that lured him from the bed of his gorgeous but vapid wife. He hates and fears Elys' witch powers. His wife resents her mastery of arms and is anxious to get her safely into skirts. Recognizing the futility of further contact, Elys rides back to the wars with Jervon.

Elys' self-reliance is interesting enough but the noteworthy touch in this story is Jervon's attitude. Here is that singular being—a liberated man. His ego is secure; his opinions are unbigoted. He does not feel threatened by anything Elys can do. "Why should one learning be less or more than any other when they are from different sources?" (*Spell of the Witch World*, p. 78). Their companionship rests on mutual respect.

Even stronger feminist sentiments are expressed in *Year of the Unicorn*, the most artistically satisfying book of the series and, indeed, of all Norton's work. This was the author's first attempt to tell a story completely

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from the heroine's viewpoint, and she found it an exciting challenge to write. She remarks that "in the years since it was first published [1965] I have had many letters from women readers who accepted Gillan with open arms, and I have had masculine readers who hotly resented her."¹

Gillan has been fighting all her young life to control her own destiny. She resists pressures to become a nun and chooses to marry a Were Rider partly to spare a weak girl that destiny and partly to seek adventure. Her groom Herrel is the least promising of the Riders, a half-blood scorned by his pack-brothers. Her resistance to illusion and latent witch powers arouse the Riders' enmity. These are wonderworkers who cannot appreciate any wonders save their own.

However, Gillan's indomitable will nearly proves her undoing. She has to suffer incredible hardships before she becomes humble enough to ask for help: "Pride is a great deceiver. We who choose to walk apart from our fellows wear it, not as a cloak, but as an enshelling armor. I who have asked nothing from my fellows—or thought I asked nothing—in that moment I was stripped of a pride which broke and fell from me, leaving me naked and alone" (p. 210).

The Riders' stratagem is to imprison her intransigent soul in another dimension while bending her body to their will, but she and Herrel, acting together, rout them.

¹"On Writing Fantasy," *The Book of Andre Norton*, ed. Roger Elwood (New York: Ace Books, 1976), p. 77.

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Imagery and incident match her identity crises perfectly as she moves from "Who was I?" to "Truly I am Gillan" to "We are Gillan and Herrel." Once again full self-realization comes in the loving union of equals. They seek their own path unfettered by family or society.

Color, action, and sympathetic characters make Norton's stories entertaining but it is their vision of personal integrity combined with organic wholeness that especially commends them to our attention. She has a unique gift for "re-enchanting" us with her creations that renew our linkages to all life."²

Sandra Miesel

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²Rick Brooks, "Andre Norton: Loss of Faith" in *The Book of Andre Norton*, p. 193.