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Janet Brennan Croft
Rutgers University, NJ

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Editorial

E EDITORIAL

BROADLY SPEAKING, THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF *Mythlore* are united by a common concern with modern responses to fantasy and fairy tale traditions.

The lead article is Richard C. West's Scholar Guest of Honor talk at Mythcon 45, held in August 2014 at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. In his wide-ranging and conversational meditation on "Where Fantasy Fits," the conference theme, West places Tolkien within a broad fantasy tradition but concentrates most closely on the decades preceding *The Hobbit* and following *The Lord of the Rings*, bearing out Garner Dozois's observation that "[a]fter Tolkien, everything changed" for genre fantasy. Of particular interest is West's discussion of science fiction works and authors appreciated by Tolkien and Lewis.

In "A Spenserian in Space," Paul R. Rovang explores the influence of *The Faerie Queene*, one of the works C.S. Lewis was particularly involved with as a scholar, and the literary and Biblical traditions it drew upon, on Lewis's Ransom trilogy and in particular on *Perelandra*.

Weronika Łaskiewicz's contribution traces the development of Peter S. Beagle's unicorns through the novel *The Last Unicorn* and three stories, paying particular attention to how Beagle adapted and rejected certain distinguishing features of traditional unicorn lore and legend.

In "Perilous Wanderings through the Enchanted Forest," Marco R.S. Post considers the roots of Mirkwood in European fairy tale traditions, and how Tolkien, like Beagle, adapted and rejected certain traditional features of the perilous wood to suit his thematic and stylistic needs as a story-teller.

John Engle's paper on Lovecraft examines a use of tradition that can be particularly troubling: the adoption of an author's work, against his own intentions, as a quasi-religious text for cultic practices. Lovecraft's mythos is thus observed in the process of deliberately being made into a tradition.

Dominic Nardi's paper, the winner of this year's Alexei Kondratiev Student Paper Award at Mythcon 45, is a thought-provoking examination of traditional political structures, theories of how they work, and how they play out in Tolkien's Middle-earth among fantastic races and landscapes. Especially intriguing is the way in which the immortality of some races and individuals affects the power balance.

We close with Daniel Lüthi's "Toying with Fantasy," an attempt to discover exactly how Terry Pratchett manages to get away with violating the rules of the fantasy tradition laid out in Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories." Pratchett consistently revels in the absurdity of Discworld as a concept, breaks the fourth wall, and disrupts Tolkien's proviso against satirizing magic itself; and yet the Discworld sails on, imperturbable.

Items reviewed in this issue include: *Stories About Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth* by Brian Attebury; *The Body in Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on Middle-earth Corporeality*, edited by Christopher Vaccaro; *Critical Essays on Lord Dunsany*, edited by S.T. Joshi; *History, Guilt, and Habit* by Owen Barfield; *In the Nameless Wood: Explorations in the Philological Hinterland of Tolkien's Literary Creations* by J.S. Ryan; *The Letters of Ruth Pitter: Silent Music*, edited by Don W. King; and briefly noted, *Tarot in Culture*, edited by Emily E. Auger, and *Coreopsis: Journal of Myth and Theatre*.

In addition to the members of the *Mythlore* Advisory Board, I would also like to thank Gregory Bassham, Jason Fisher, Robert T. Tally, John Rateliff, Joe Young, David Oberhelman, Farah Mendlesohn, and Kuroda Makato.

—Janet Brennan Croft

