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## Editorial

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## Online MidSummer Seminar 2025

### More Perilous and Fair: Women and Gender in Mythopoeic Fantasy

August 2-5, 2024

Via Zoom and Discord

<https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-04.htm>



## Editorial

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## EDITORIAL

THIS ISSUE MARKS MY TWENTIETH AS EDITOR. My first ten years as the fourth editor of *Mythlore* have flown by, and I anticipate continuing for many more years. I don't know half of you half as well as I should like . . . well, you know the rest.

This issue is, for a change, heavier on C.S. Lewis than on J.R.R. Tolkien. We start with a particularly interesting sequence of articles linked by a concern with Lewis's sources in Spenser, Dante, and medieval symbolism and literature in general; a sort of special half-issue on Lewis's debt to elements of the "discarded image" and its time.

Paul Rovang continues his exploration of Spenserian parallels in the Space Trilogy, following on his work on *Perelandra* in *Mythlore* #123 in 2014. This current essay traces *The Faerie Queene's* clear influence on *That Hideous Strength*, particularly on the characters and relationship of Mark and Jane Studdock.

Sarah Eddings also examines the Space Trilogy, in her case looking at the contrasting symbolisms of vertical structures (mountains, trees, built structures, and so on) and waves, and how they are reconciled in one particular passage in *Perelandra*.

The next two articles are a pair that comment on and refer to each others' analysis of *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader."* Thomas L. Martin examines the motif of the seven cardinal sins, not across the whole seven books as might be expected, but within *Voyage* alone, linking each of the seven lost lords of Narnia to a particular vice. Mattison Schuknecht looks instead to the *Purgatorio* and its imagery of sun and water; his observations on the horizontal structure of *Voyage* versus the vertical orientation of *Purgatorio* create resonances with Eddings' article.

Frequent contributor Joe R. Christopher contributes an article on two very different satyrs in C.S. Lewis's works, one appearing in his early pre-conversion poetry and one in his more mature Narnia books; Lewis handles the imagery and associations of the satyr quite differently at these points in his writing career.

Leaving Lewis, we come to the first appearance of Doctor Who in these pages. Buket Akgün compares the use and resolution of Minotaur and

Labyrinth themes and imagery in Victor Pelevin's novel *The Helmet of Horror* and the sixth season Doctor Who episode "The God Complex."

Next we have three articles on J.R.R. Tolkien's works. Steven Kelly's "Breaking the Dragon's Gaze" is a fascinating look at Tolkien's treatment of economics in Middle-earth, using tobacco as an example of a Lukácsian fetishized commodity, and explaining why this is important not just as an example of world-building but as an indicator of the power of unexamined economic assumptions.

John Miller examines the geography of Middle-earth in terms of what it reveals about gender and race, and how Tolkien used landscape to "[map] alternative masculinities onto [...] different races" and emphasize contrasting depictions of femininity through female characters and races that either "stay put" or wander. In our final paper, Cody Jarman uses the theories of Owen Barfield to analyze the language and rhetoric used in the service of evil in *The Lord of the Rings* as a critique of modernity and the divorce of true meaning from speech.

There are three items in our Notes and Letters column, a relatively new section which includes brief, non-refereed items of a factual, speculative, documentary, or useful nature. John Rosegrant responds to Nancy Bunting's provocative article on Tolkien's traumatic family history in *Mythlore* #127; Debra Polesiak notes and explicates a pattern of references to Browning's "Childe Roland" in Harper Lee's recently published *Go Set a Watchman*; and Ryder Miller draws our attention to American World War I veteran William Faulkner's *A Fable* as an example of the fantastic in response to the war's trauma.

If you would like to keep up with news relating to *Mythlore*, please follow us on Facebook, where we post advance notice of items accepted for upcoming issues, renewal reminders, and so forth. *The Mythlore Index Plus*, which covers *Mythlore*, *Tolkien Journal*, published Mythcon proceedings, and books published by Mythopoeic Press, is available as a free pdf file; download it at <http://www.mythsoc.org/press/mythlore-index-plus-electronic/>. If you are involved with a conference related to fantasy literature or teaching a course and would like to have print copies of older issues of *Mythlore* to distribute, please contact the editor at [mythlore@mythsoc.org](mailto:mythlore@mythsoc.org).

In addition to the members of the *Mythlore* Advisory Board and the Mythopoeic Society Council of Stewards, I would also like to thank Bonnie Gaarden, Chris Vaccaro, Melissa Beattie, Gwenyth Hood, Don King, Gregory Bassham, Joe R. Christopher, and David Oberhelman for their assistance with this issue.

—Janet Brennan Croft