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I'm especially delighted that we are able to start out this issue with G. Ronald Murphy's Scholar Guest of Honor address from the 2012 Mythcon in Berkeley. In this excerpt from his forthcoming book, *Tree of Salvation*, Murphy explores how those who introduced Christianity to Scandinavia deliberately adapted and "translated" Norse religious motifs and practices in two parallel ways—through literary works, especially as seen in the *Heliand*, but also through church art and architecture. In this illustrated essay, we can see how beliefs about Yggdrasil and Ragnarok are incorporated and transformed in the design and ornamentation of the unusual stave churches of Norway.

I'm also pleased to be able to present an interview with Colin Havard, son of Inkleling Dr. Robert E. "Humphrey" Havard. In late 2011, Justin T. Noetzel and Matthew R. Bardowell had a chance to meet with Havard and record his reminiscences about his father, his Catholic faith, his friendships with J.R.R. Tolkien and the Lewis brothers in particular, and the Inklings and practicing medicine in Oxford in general. As the lone Inkleling from a scientific background, he brought a unique perspective to the group's discussions.

Unusually, we have only one Tolkien-centered paper in this issue. Sue Bridgwater finds connections between *The Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien's long professional engagement with the medieval romance *Sir Orfeo*. *Orfeo's* plot elements of a king's separation from his queen and his testing of his steward are echoed (albeit in a somewhat fragmented way) and re-examined in the relationships of Aragorn, Arwen, and the house of the Stewards of Gondor.

Lydia R. Browning next takes us through Charles Williams's *Descent Into Hell* with a focus on the theme of community versus isolation. Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Self Reliance" is used as a key to understanding Lawrence Wentworth's increasing withdrawal from reality and "the city" of his fellow human beings, in contrast with the workings of coinherence personified in the interactions of other characters.

We next have, by odd coincidence, two papers on an author too seldom featured in *Mythlore's* pages: the Irish fantasist Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, Lord Dunsany. We start with Alyssa House-Thomas's study of Lord Dunsany's "Oriental" fairy tales. House-Thomas divides Dunsany's technique and aims into "traditional" Oriental tales, of the sort Edward Said describes in his theories of Western Orientalist art and literature, and non-traditional, post-modern tales in which Orientalism is turned upside-down and the West is turned into the Other. This paper won the Alexei Kondratiev Student Paper Award at the 2012 Mythcon in Berkeley.

Starting from nearly the same place but arriving at a different conclusion, Erin Sheley also takes Dunsany's Oriental fairy tales as her subject. Her interest is in how the inside-out Orientalist tales demonstrate or challenge theories of colonialism, anti-colonialism, and post-colonialism, delving into Dunsany's history with W.B Yeats and comparing his tales to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.

Continuing our Irish theme, in our next paper Roxanne Bodsworth looks at W.B Yeats's poem "Cucuhlain's Fight with the Sea" and examines not just how but why Yeats deviated from the original tales he mined for this material, shifting the focus and using the archetypal characters to demonstrate new themes and reinterpret traditional values.

Our final paper is, at this writing, the first major piece of scholarship I am aware of dealing with George R.R. Martin's fantasy sequence, *A Song of Fire and Ice*. Susan Johnston compellingly argues that though the series is incomplete at present, J.R.R. Tolkien's concept of eucatastrophe and its dark twin, dyscatastrophe, can illuminate what Martin may be trying to accomplish in this bleak and bloody series and provide the reader with a way to understand its value and potential.

We close with our usual selection of reviews. In addition to the referees on the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, I would also like to thank Scott McLaren, John Rateliff, Brian Hudson, David Oberhelman, and Jason Fisher for their assistance with this issue.

—Janet Brennan Croft