Editorial

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Our themes in this issue are a mixed bag: gods and goddesses, both ancient and modern (particularly Aphrodite); heroism, real and ideal; and sources, again, ancient and modern.

We start with the modern mythopoeia of Neil Gaiman’s American Gods in Rut Blomqvist’s “The Road of Our Senses,” which examines the intertextuality of culture and myth and the ways in which new myth is formed through an exploration of binaries throughout the novel and the added scenes in the 10th Anniversary edition.

Next Joe R. Christopher identifies Janie Moore as the sometimes goddess, sometimes human Δ or Despoina in C.S. Lewis’s early poems, letters, and diaries. The changing nature of her depiction shows the young Lewis developing a surer handling of his chosen mythic references as he matures and reinforces the thesis that they were lovers.

Janet Brennan Croft looks at a recent specimen of popular culture, the movie The Devil Wears Prada, and finds in it an echo of the story of Aphrodite and Psyche, speaking to the needs of young women for a female mentor-figure.

The centrality of service to the goddess of love in E.R. Eddison’s conceptions of heroism and the properly lived life is the focus of Joe Young’s study of the Zimiamvia trilogy. Eddison considered his work an important response to World War II and a call for a more meaningful type of courage and way of living both during and after the war.

We continue this focus on World War II with Steven Brett Carter’s essay on Faramir, that mysterious character who walked out of the woods into The Lord of the Rings, and how his modern tactics, leadership style, and heroism grew out of Tolkien’s war experiences.

Alexander M. Bruce takes us back to classical warfare and the Fall of Troy with his examination of what Tolkien did with the Aeneid when he used it as a source for “The Fall of Gondolin.” The parallels between the stories of Tuor and Aeneas are striking, but more interesting is how Tolkien put his own thematic and symbolic stamp on the material.
Ruth Berman returns to our pages with a companion to her study of Tolkien’s use of the Andrew Lang fairy tale collections (in #99/100) with a piece on how Lewis used them as well, but also tended to look favorably on and use more modern fantasy sources than Tolkien.

A mixed bag is a fitting term for our last entry, in which Michael Livingston leads us on a linguistic journey into the origins of the words _hobbit_ and _Baggins_ and their surprising relations to one another. (Livingston has scored a rare double trifecta with this issue; this is his third _Mythlore_ article [see also #95/96 and #105/106], and Brett Carter joins two of his other students, Noah Koubenec [#113/114] and Melissa Smith [#99/100], as _Mythlore_ authors.)


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—Janet Brennan Croft