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Editorial

Janet Brennan Croft
University of Oklahoma

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Editorial



EDITORIAL

WE BEGIN THIS ISSUE OF *MYTHLORE* with frequent reviewer Jason Fisher's first article for us, a surprisingly engaging linguistic study of the Mirkwood episode in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, which he uses as a typical example of the depth and interwoven complexity of the author's linguistic invention.

Next, we have a similarly engaging look at one of the more neglected populations of Middle-earth in Robert T. Tally's careful study of "the orcs question," in which he investigates their behavior, conversations, and interactions with other races in order to propose some challenging conclusions about racism, souls, and Tolkien's purpose in creating orcs the way he did.

The next three papers all have something to say about the role of women in fantasy. T.S. Miller takes us through a reading of Ursula K. Le Guin's not-exactly-historical novel *Lavinia*, which combines Le Guin's typical thematic interest in the feminine voice and experience with postmodern and existential concerns about authorship, textuality, and the collaboration between author and reader (and author and character)—resulting, as always with Le Guin, in something rich, deep, and difficult to classify.

Lynn Whitaker's challenging paper on "rape narratives" in Tolkien's *Silmarillion* provides us with a new lens through which to view the stories of Aredhel and Lúthien. Her convincing argument sheds light on the themes and traditions Tolkien was drawing on as a storyteller, but more importantly, examines the theological implications suggested by his depictions of the women in these stories and how these "rape narratives" serve to underscore the sacredness of the created world in Tolkien's legendarium.

We return, briefly, to the primary world with Sam McBride's contribution. Building on the work Diana Pavlac Glycer has done to establish a framework and a set of terms for understanding the collaborative nature of the Inklings, McBride takes us outside of their exclusively masculine circle to look at the women who influenced C.S. Lewis's writing. His study introduces us to women who served Lewis as, in Glycer's terms, Resonators, Opponents, Conductors, and so on, from anonymous fans to well-known names like Pitter and Sayers.

The next three papers delve into the deep theological structure of Tolkien's legendarium by examining the nature and function of doom, fate, heroism, rebellion, and free will. Jesse Mitchell's lengthy study of Túrin Turambar uses two frameworks to examine his character and story: that of the

Byronic Hero (with a side glance at the Gothic Villain in order to differentiate the two), and that of the Absurd Hero, exemplified by Camus's Sisyphus.

The roots of Tolkien's concepts in early Germanic understandings of the ideas of fate and doom are the subject of Richard J. Whitt's essay. His examination of how these initially pagan notions were subsumed into the Christian idea of divine providence, and most notably blended together in the Old English *Beowulf* and Old Saxon *Heliand*, provide us with a basis for understanding how even the Valar are subject to time and the fate decreed by Ilúvatar.

My own essay, the Scholar Guest of Honor speech at Mythcon 41, begins with a basic review of the theological concepts underlying the ideas of war in heaven and free will and, touching briefly on Stanley Milgram's experiments in obedience along the way, examines various examples of disobedience in Tolkien's legendarium, their consequences, and their ultimate subservience to the eucatastrophic fate of Arda.

We conclude on a meditative note with William H. Stoddard's elegiac contemplation of the function of memory in Tolkien's Middle-earth, and the way the complex intersection of memory, loss, immortality, consolation, and creativity is made flesh in Tolkien's depictions of the races of Elves and Men and their interactions.

This issue we feature reviews of *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History*, by Dimitra Fimi; *Charles Williams and his Contemporaries*, by Suzanne Bray and Richard Sturch; *In the Land of Invented Languages*, by Arika Okrent; *Millennial Mythmaking: Essays on the Power of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature*, edited by John Perlich and David Whitt; *Middle-earth Minstrel: Essays on Music in Tolkien*, edited by Bradford Lee Eden; *Harry Potter and Imagination: The Way Between Two Worlds*, by Travis Prinzi; the first issue of the new journal *Fastitocalon*; and *Theodor SEUSS Geisel* by Donald E. Pease. If you would like to be a reviewer or suggest a book to review, please contact the editor. I am also interested in adding new referees to the list of scholars who review *Mythlore's* submissions; if you feel you are qualified to evaluate submissions and have time to read two to four papers a year, please contact me.

In addition to the referees on the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, I would also like to thank John Rateliff, Anne Petty, and Amy H. Sturgis for their assistance with this issue. I am delighted to have reached the milestone of my tenth issue as editor, and could not have done it without their support and that of the Society's Board of Stewards. Thank you all!

—Janet Brennan Croft

