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## Editorial

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<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-51.htm>



## Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-52.htm>

# EDITORIAL

IN THIS ISSUE WE FEATURE TWO MAJOR, LENGTHY ARTICLES about individual works by C.S. Lewis: his first published volume of poetry, *Spirits in Bondage*, and his last novel, *Till We Have Faces*.

Joe R. Christopher starts us off with a detailed examination of each poem in *Spirits in Bondage*, using the young poet's "Matter = Nature = Satan" equation (as expressed in his letters to his friend Arthur Greeves) to explore the underlying themes of Lewis's not just pre-conversion, but pre-theism "cycle of lyrics." The contrast between beauty and evil, irreconcilable in this stage of Lewis's theological development, is shown to be a major concern in this work, heavily influenced by his World War I experiences.

Gwenyth Hood returns to *Mythlore* with an in-depth exploration of Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*, his retelling of the myth of Psyche and Cupid from the viewpoint of one of Psyche's sisters, Orual. Taking as her key the god's admonition to Orual after she forces her sister to disobey him, "You also shall be Psyche," Hood examines Orual's transformations of herself and her society and the nature and meaning of the tasks she symbolically shares with her sister.

In A. Keith Kelly and Michael Livingstone's thought-provoking article, we try to discover exactly what Frodo goes to when he sails from the Grey Havens. By looking at paradise, purgatory, and earthly Edens in medieval literature and theology, we gain a better understanding of the spiritual purpose of Tolkien's "far green country" beyond the bent paths of the world.

Peter S. Beagle's *The Last Unicorn*, long a favorite with *Mythlore* readers, is the subject of Geoffrey Reiter's contribution to this issue. In it he looks at the subtle balance of mortality and immortality in this story and how Beagle resolves their opposition though what his characters learn (or don't learn) from experiencing both states of being.

Brent D. Johnson adds to the recent scholarly dialogue on Tolkien's depiction of war-related mental trauma by examining Eowyn not as an example

of post-traumatic stress disorder, but as a character suffering from, and beginning to recover from, traumatic grief. Johnson's experience as a military chaplain gives added strength to his observations.

My own article explores the depiction of gender in education, and how gender issues in education relate to power and agency, in two current young adult fantasy series featuring feisty heroines determined to learn all that they can: Hermione Granger in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, and Tiffany Aching, main character of three recent Discworld novels by Terry Pratchett.

Our final article for this issue, by Emma Hawkins, examines dogs in Tolkien's fiction. Not just the actual dogs that appear in a wide range of his works, though; she also examines the use of dog-imagery in simile, metaphor, and character description, particularly the complex pattern of references and allusions Tolkien uses in the depictions of Sam, Gollum, and Wormtongue.

This issue we feature reviews of *Lilith in a New Light: Essays on the George MacDonald Fantasy Novel*, edited by Lucas H. Harriman; *Black and White Ogre Country: The Lost Tales of Hilary Tolkien*, edited by Angela Gardner; the new second edition of *C.S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*, by John Beversluis; *Faith and Choice in the Works of Joss Whedon* by K. Dale Koontz; *Fritz Leiber, Critical Essays*, edited by Benjamin Szumanskyj; *Myth and Magic: Art According to the Inklings*, edited by Eduardo Segura and Thomas Honegger; *From Narnia to A Space Odyssey: The War of Ideas Between Arthur C. Clarke and C.S. Lewis*, edited by Ryder W. Miller; *The Mirror Crack'd: Fear and Horror in J.R.R. Tolkien's Major Works*, edited by Lynn Forest-Hill; *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion*, by Douglas Charles Kane; and *Night Operation* and *Eager Spring*, novellas by Owen Barfield. We are delighted to welcome back our Society's founder, Glen GoodKnight, as the reviewer of *Black and White Ogre Country*. If you would like to be a reviewer or suggest a book to review, or if you want to submit a letter for the Letters column, please contact the editor.

The cumulative supplement to the first edition of the *Mythlore Index* continues to be updated on the Society's website. Supplemental indexes to the artwork published in *Mythlore* and to *Tolkien Journal* (which merged with *Mythlore* in 1976) are planned for later this year.

In addition to the referees on the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, I would also like to thank Anne C. Petty for her assistance with this issue.

— Janet Brennan Croft

