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Editorial

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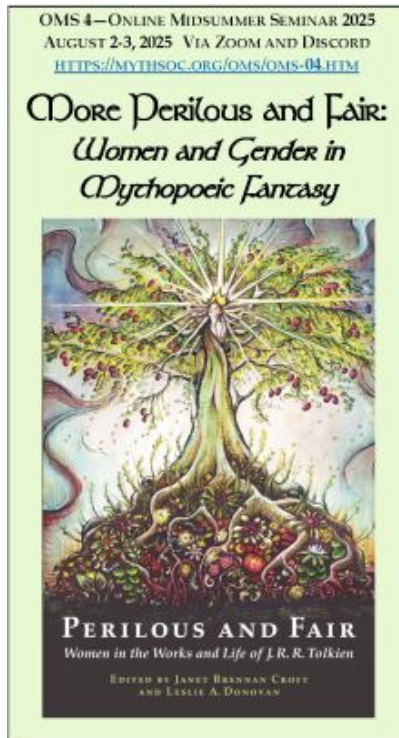
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Editorial

Janet Brennan Croft

The majority of papers in this particularly hefty issue of *Mythlore* fall readily into three groups examining different kinds of influences on authors of mythopoeic fiction.

Our first three papers examine the ways in which scholarly expertise strengthens the works of Tolkien and Lewis. Their profound knowledge of the medieval world adds depth to their revival of particular symbols, themes, and techniques—a depth lacking in fantasy writers who merely use these devices as stage setting. K.S. Whetter and R. Andrew McDonald examine the legends and lore of famous swords in medieval Germanic, Norse, Celtic and English literature, and how Tolkien adapted and added to this rich history in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Chad Wriglesworth deals with C.S. Lewis's use of medieval legends and religious symbolism of the unicorn in two versions of a poem about the Ark and in *The Last Battle* and *The Great Divorce*. Mark F. Hall studies Tolkien's use of alliterative meter in his poetry, both that embedded in *The Lord of the Rings* and published separately elsewhere. Hall's remarks on "The Lay of the Children of Húrin" will be particularly interesting in light of the recent announcement of a forthcoming edition of *The Children of Húrin*, compiled as a stand-alone book by Christopher Tolkien.

Tom Shippey's claim in *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* that the traumatic changes of the twentieth century have led to the fantastic becoming our "dominant literary mode" is borne out by our next group of papers, showing the influence of modern intellectual ferment and global war on Tolkien and Dunsany. The disruption caused by a war of ideas is detailed in A.R. Bossert's paper on Pope Pius X and the Catholic Church's response to modernism in the early years of the century, and shows this controversy's clear influence on Tolkien's thinking in his letters and fiction. Michael Livingston examines Tolkien's World War I experiences and his uniquely sympathetic depiction of Frodo as a shell-shocked soldier. David

J. Carlson looks at the effect of the Great War on another fantasist, Lord Dunsany, and his updating of the Quixotic romance in *Don Rodriquez*.

A third strong source of influence is the work of other authors. Teresa Hooper shows C.S. Lewis in dialogue with Rudyard Kipling about the themes of the Great Game and the Inner Circle, which Lewis resolves in the resonant image of the Great Dance. Anne Amison traces the unexpected influence of William Morris's *Icelandic Journals* and *News From Nowhere* on *The Hobbit* and the world of The Shire. And Felicia Jean Steele closes this section with a paper on the influence of Tolkien's *Beowulf* essay, and his subtle shaping of our current cultural conception of dragons, on Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf*.

Our remaining papers are studies of character. Ernelle Fife discusses the concept of the wise woman warrior, focusing primarily on Éowyn, Orual, and Hermione Granger but bringing in other characters from the works of Tolkien, Lewis, and Rowling as well. Devin Brown studies the inner quest that takes Frodo from isolation to community in *The Lord of the Rings*, in an interesting contrast to Livingston's paper on Frodo's war trauma. Michael Treschow and Mark Duckworth investigate the oft-maligned Tom Bombadil chapters of *The Lord of the Rings*, revealing their centrality to Tolkien's philosophy and Tom's frequently overlooked symbolic importance at later points in the book. We close with Frank Riga's study of Michael Hoffmann's reinterpretation of Bottom in his 1999 film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which treats Bottom and his interactions with Faërie seriously rather than farcically and resonates throughout the film in a shifting of focus from the aristocratic court to the dignity of the common man and his worthiness to enter Faërie.

I would like to thank *Mythlore's* outstanding editorial advisory board again for their help and guidance in choosing papers that reflect our aim: to publish the best writing on the study of mythopoeic literature, and to promote a style of scholarship which is rigorous and challenging, yet approachable and free of excessive jargon or esoteric theory. Subscribers can expect to see issue 97/98 in the spring of 2007. I welcome letters, comments, queries, brief reviews, and completed articles, and encourage presenters at Mythcon and other conferences to submit their papers to *Mythlore*. Please contact me at the address inside the back cover with any questions or suggestions, or see the society's website for submission guidelines.