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Editorial

Theodore James Sherman
Middle Tennessee State University

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Editorial

Editorial

Theodore James Sherman

IN reply to a ballot question a member of The Mythopoeic Society wrote recently that *Mythlore* should include articles about fantasy authors other than just the three included in the subtitle. I could not agree more, as long as the authors under consideration write works of fantasy that are “mythopoeic literature.” Not all writers of fantasy are myth-makers, though most mythopoeic authors are writers of fantasy. *Mythlore* is devoted to the study not only of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, but also of mythopoeic literature. I encourage readers to submit articles on works of mythopoeic literature no matter who the author. Thus, in the coming months and years I fully expect to publish articles on the myth-making of Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy and J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, both of which are major new publications of mythopoeic fiction. And if one looks through past issues of *Mythlore*, one will see that it has included articles about authors other than “the big three.”

This issue of *Mythlore*, for example, while focusing on C. S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*, includes an article that discusses similarities between the *Chronicles of Narnia* and J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books. In her article, Joy Farmer relates and discusses many interesting similarities between the two series of books, but—and more importantly in my opinion—she also discusses the similar intentions of the authors.

Peter J. Schakel, in “The ‘Correct’ Order for Reading The *Chronicles of Narnia*?” discusses how reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* in their original order of publication creates a richer and more satisfying reading experience than does reading them in the order of Narnian chronology, which is how the books are now packaged and marketed. He convincingly argues that reading the books in chronological order (in terms of Narnian time) produces a reading experience that is flatter and duller than that produced by reading them in order of publication.

“Aslan’s Sacrifice and the Doctrine of Atonement in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*,” by Jay Ruud, examines Lewis’s use of the (medieval) typological approach to literature to understand the theology behind Aslan’s death and

resurrection. Ruud clearly shows that Lewis's presentation of Aslan's death is related to the writings of such medieval authors as St. Anselm of Canterbury and William Langland and that Aslan defeats the White Witch by tricking her (the medieval *pia fraus* theme, though Ruud does not use the term).

In "Apologist for the Past: The Medieval Vision of C. S. Lewis's 'Space Trilogy' and Chronicles of Narnia," Louis Markos argues that Lewis employs medieval images and concepts in both series of books as a means to instill medieval values in his modern readers.

Salwa Khoddam shows, in "Where Sky and Water Meet": Christian Iconography in C. S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*," that the iconic imagery which fills the book "accompanies the daily activities of the characters on their mission to find and rescue the seven missing lords in order to illuminate and transform the characters' souls."

"The Magician's Niece: The Kinship between J. K. Rowling and C. S. Lewis," by Joy Farmer, discusses the similar intentions of Rowling and Lewis and their use of similar themes. In short, Farmer demonstrates that both series of books are, to use Lewis's phrase, "the right sort of books" because they inculcate virtue and present us with heroes who defeat evil.

Joe R. Christopher, in "Mount Purgatory Arises near Narnia," examines the images of the garden on a mountain or hill in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, tracing them back to Dante, Milton, and Spenser. Christopher contends that Lewis writes in the fairytale tradition and uses such allusive images for two reasons: one is for literary aesthetics and the other is for the effect on readers.

In addition to the articles above, this issue also includes three book reviews and three letters. All in all, in my very biased opinion, I think this is a fantastic issue of *Mythlore* and a worthy addition to Lewis studies. Students, scholars, and other appreciators of Lewis should cherish this volume for years to come for the insightful articles it contains as well as for the range of approaches employed by the authors to examine *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. William J. Connelly, Chair of the Department of English at Middle Tennessee State University (Murfreesboro, TN), for granting me a reduced teaching load during my tenure as Editor of *Mythlore*.