



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 36 | Number 2 | Issue 132, Spring/Summer

Article 9

4-15-2018

Ursula K. Le Guin in *Mythlore*

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Recommended Citation

Croft, Janet Brennan (2018) "Ursula K. Le Guin in *Mythlore*," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 36 : No. 2 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol36/iss2/9>

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Ursula K. Le Guin in *Mythlore*

Abstract

Ursula K. Le Guin, whose career and influence are examined in brief in the preceding note by David Bratman, has long been a writer of interest to the readers of *Mythlore* and members of the Mythopoeic Society. She was the Author Guest of Honor at Mythcon 19 (the theme of which was “Legends for a New Land: Fantasy in America”) at Berkeley CA in 1988, and was a finalist for the Myth and Fantasy Studies Award in 2011 and 2012 for her essay collection *Cheek by Jowl* (Aqueduct Press, 2009).

Additional Keywords

Le Guin, Ursula K.—Bibliography

points. *The Lord of the Rings* appears in a chapter on point of view. To illustrate the possibility of dropping briefly into other view perspectives, Le Guin uses the passage with the sapient fox who sees the hobbits asleep in “Three Is Company.” Some critics consider that passage one of Tolkien’s worst blunders, but as Tolkien himself once wrote, “the passages or chapters that are to some a blemish are all by others specially approved” (xxiii). I think we can see here Le Guin as a most perceptive and approving reader of Tolkien.

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DAVID BRATMAN is co-editor of *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review* and has written the annual “Year’s Work in Tolkien Studies” for that publication. His other writings include the article on authors contemporary with Tolkien for *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien* edited by Stuart D. Lee (Wiley Blackwell, 2014) and the bio-bibliographical appendix on the Inklings to *The Company They Keep* by Diana Pavlac Glyer (Kent State, 2007). His work on Tolkien and the Inklings has also appeared in *Mythlore*.



URSULA K. LE GUIN IN MYTHLORE

JANET BRENNAN CROFT

URSULA K. LE GUIN, WHOSE CAREER AND INFLUENCE are examined in brief in the preceding note by David Bratman, has long been a writer of interest to the readers of *Mythlore* and members of the Mythopoeic Society. She was the Author Guest of Honor at Mythcon 19 (the theme of which was “Legends for a New Land: Fantasy in America”) at Berkeley CA in 1988, and was a finalist for the Myth and Fantasy Studies Award in 2011 and 2012 for her essay collection *Cheek by Jowl* (Aqueduct Press, 2009).

BY LE GUIN

Le Guin, Ursula K. “Legends for a New Land.” *Mythlore*, vol. 15, no.2 (#56), 1988, pp. 4–10. Guest of Honor speech, Mythcon 19. An account of how Le Guin was finally able to write *Always Coming Home*, using not an imaginary world but the transfigured Napa Valley of her childhood. Acknowledges her debt to Native American worldview known through its myths.

Le Guin, Ursula K., Todd Barton, Margaret Chodos-Levine, and George Hersh. "The Making of *Always Coming Home*." *Mythlore*, vol. 17, no.3 (#65), 1991, pp. 56–63. Transcript of panel discussion from 1988 Mythopoeic Conference. Author, illustrator, composer, and cartographer/ researcher discuss the genesis of *Always Coming Home*.

SCHOLARLY ARTICLES ABOUT LE GUIN

Brown, Barbara. "Feminist Myth in Le Guin's 'Sur.'" *Mythlore*, vol. 16, no. 4 (#62), 1990, pp. 56–59. Argues that Le Guin has created in "Sur" a "myth of women explorers, a myth of female heroes." Contrasts the fictional all-female Antarctic expedition with historical examples, the latter focusing on the individual and the former on the collective.

Bucknall, Barbara J. "Rilke and Le Guin." *Mythlore*, vol. 16, no. 2 (#60), 1989, pp. 62–66. Seeks similarities in Rilke and Le Guin, especially in the power of naming and the view of death as a necessary part of life. Notes in particular parallels between Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and *The Farthest Shore*.

Feimer, Joel N. "Biblical Typology in Le Guin's *The Eye of the Heron*." *Mythlore*, vol. 19, no. 4 (#74), 1993, pp. 13–19. Noting it is only one of many sources for her world-making, examines biblical typology and figural elements from Le Guin's *The Eye of the Heron*.

Franco, Carol. "Self-Conscious Narration as the Complex Representation of Hope in Le Guin's *Always Coming Home*." *Mythlore*, vol. 15, no. 3 (#57), 1989, pp. 57–60. Calls *Always Coming Home* an "open-ended utopia" that presents the possibility of utopia without being specific about the means to get there. The self-reflexive narrator, Pandora, is the "structuring paradox" of a novel that leads the reader to long for a utopia while remaining ambiguous about its possibility.

Harris, Mason. "The Psychology of Power in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Orwell's *1984* and Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*." *Mythlore*, vol. 15, no. 1 (#55), 1988, pp. 46–56. Argues that despite their differences, Tolkien and Orwell share a similar response to absolute power, as "parallel evolution in the imagination of two humane British fantasists with an interest in the moral implications of politics." Sees *A Wizard of Earthsea* as dealing with a similar problem but in psychological terms constrained by the coming-of-age theme.

Heldreth, Lillian M. "To Defend or to Correct: Patterns of Culture in *Always Coming Home*." *Mythlore*, vol.16, no.1 (#59), 1989, pp. 58–62, 66. Relates Hilgartner and Bartter's extension of linguistic theory into behavior theory to the cultures of the Kesh and the Condors. Explains their cultural patterns of "image-correction" and

“image-defense.” Sees utopian and dystopian elements tempered by realistic views of human nature.

Lacey, Lauren J. “Ceremony’s Fantastic Stories.” *The Intersection of Fantasy and Native America: From H.P. Lovecraft to Leslie Marmon Silko*, edited by Amy H. Sturgis and David D. Oberhelman, Mythopoeic Press, 2009, pp. 127–39. Investigates the use of story and storytelling in *Ceremony* and in the fiction of other female fantasists of the 1970s such as Anne McCaffrey, Marge Piercy, Octavia E. Butler, and Ursula K. Le Guin, finding common threads among writers of that decade.

Miller, T.S. “Myth-Remaking in the Shadow of Vergil: The Captive (-ated) Voice of Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Lavinia*.” *Mythlore*, vol. 29, no.1/2 (#111/112), 2010, pp. 29–50. Reading of Le Guin’s not-exactly-historical novel *Lavinia*, which combines her 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. Explores how she adapted the original sources to create a novel from the female character’s point of view.

Paxson, Diana. “The Tolkien Tradition.” *Mythlore*, vol.11, no.1 (#39), 1984, pp. 23–27, 37. Analyzes what makes a fantasy “in the Tolkien tradition” and applies this definition to a number of contemporary fantasy authors, including Ursula Le Guin, Richard Adams, Lloyd Alexander, and Stephen R. Donaldson.

Rawls, Melanie A. “Witches, Wives and Dragons: The Evolution of the Women in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Earthsea—An Overview*.” *Mythlore*, vol. 26, no.3/4 (#101/102), 2008, pp.129–49. A survey of the evolution of women in Le Guin’s *Earthsea* series, examining how the author reassessed her depiction of gender in the earlier books and deliberately changed her viewpoint in the later books.

Sobat, Gail Sidonie. “The Night in Her Own Country: The Heroine’s Quest for Self in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Tombs of Atuan*.” *Mythlore*, vol.21, no.3 (#81), 1996, pp. 24–32. Examines *The Tombs of Atuan* and *Tehanu* in contrast to the “journey of the hero” as defined by Campbell and Pratt, and also Jungian concepts of the Self. Notes ways in which the journey of the heroine is different from that of the hero.

Thompson, Christine K. “Going North and West to Watch the Dragons Dance: Norse and Celtic Elements in Ursula Le Guin’s *Earthsea Trilogy*.” *Mythlore*, vol. 15, no.1 (#55), 1988, pp. 19–22. Sees the world-view of *Earthsea*, as well as much of the symbolism, as characteristic of pre-Christian Nordic and Celtic thought. Focus on present life rather than future is a significant theme.

COLUMNS ABOUT LE GUIN

Beach, Sarah. "Mythopoesis: Characters." *Mythlore*, vol.11, no.1 (#39), 1984, pp. 28, 45. Discusses how fantasy authors create characters, drawing on Jungian psychology and essays by Le Guin.

Beach, Sarah. "Mythopoesis: History." *Mythlore*, vol.10, no.3 (#37), 1984, pp. 26, 34. Studies the process of creating fantasy worlds, or sub-creation, with observations from several authors including Le Guin, Lewis, and Tolkien.

Beach, Sarah. "Mythopoesis: Naming." *Mythlore*, vol.10, no.4 (#38), 1984, p.49. Discusses the significance of choosing names in fantasy, drawing on statements from Le Guin and Tolkien.

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Lindow, Sandra J. *Dancing the Tao: Le Guin and Moral Development*.

Christopher, Joe R. "Poems." *Mythlore*, vol.4, no.3 (#15), 1977, pp.18–20.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Wild Angels*.

Colvin, George. "Success and Something Less." *Mythlore*, vol.4, no.2 (#14), 1976, pp. 25–27.

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Funk, Grace E. "Essays by Le Guin." *Mythlore*, vol.8, no.2 (#28), 1981, pp. 19, 37.

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GoodKnight, Glen. "Collateral Soup." *Mythlore*, vol.18, no.4 (#70), 1992, p. 45.

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Oziewicz, Marek. *One Earth, One People: The Mythopoeic Fantasy Series of Ursula K. Le Guin, Lloyd Alexander, Madeleine L'Engle, and Orson Scott Card*.