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Editorial

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Editorial

Abstract

This is *Mythlore's* Official 50th Anniversary Issue, a major milestone in the life of any journal and one we are proud to have reached with the ongoing support of the Mythopoeic Society and the Council of Stewards, our dedicated editorial advisory board members, and our subscribers. *Mythlore* stands on the shoulders of giants, a theme that unites this entire issue.

Additional Keywords

mythopoeic society



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Our lead item, fittingly, is a history of the journal, from its founding through all the changes it has weathered over five decades of publication. This history updates and incorporates the introduction to the *Mythlore Index Plus* and the commemorative booklet distributed at Mythcon 49. A checklist provides information about the entire runs of *Mythlore* and *Tolkien Journal*.

Robin Anne Reid's Guest of Honor address from Mythcon 49 is a reflection on some of the unsung foundational work in our field. Reid talks about bibliographies and research guides to popular and academic criticism relating to Tolkien, the recent trend towards more specialized bibliographic topics, using electronic databases to track the development of the field, and the intellectual and personal rewards of taking a deep dive into an early fanzine.

Nicole M. duPlessis's lengthy essay on Edith Tolkien is a much-needed reassessment of the dominance of Humphrey Carpenter's not-entirely-sympathetic portrait of her in his *Biography* over all other depictions of the Tolkiens' courtship and marriage. This is highly recommended reading before the May 2019 release of the *Tolkien* biopic, which promises a contrasting portrayal emphasizing the "gallant and gay courage" Tolkien admired in his wife and the "vivacity" her children remember.

Guy Inchbald draws our attention to one of the many giants on whose shoulders C.S. Lewis stood: J.W. Dunne and his *Experiment with Time*. Verlyn Flieger has of course written on Dunne's influence on Tolkien, but here we take a look at Narnian time (with a short detour to the world of *The Dark Tower*) and what it may owe to Dunne's concept of serialism.

Taking us back to Tolkien, Chad Chisholm digs out the roots of the persuasive oratorical techniques used by Saruman and Gandalf (and the ethics behind them) from the deep earth of classical rhetoric in Plato and Gorgias.

We turn to a very different *Dark Tower* with Abigail L. Montgomery's study of Stephen King's myth-infused eight-book series. Here we look at one of the giants arrayed behind both *The Dark Tower* series and *The Stand*: the poetic

work of William Butler Yeats, specifically “The Tower” and “The Black Tower” (with a few comments on Robert Browning’s “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came” added for good measure).

My own essay for this issue explores how one of the major mythopoeic story-patterns, the tale of the knight Parzival, the Grail, and the Fisher King, provides us with a way to appreciate the significance of the questions young Kira asks in the television series *Orphan Black*.¹

In the Notes and Letters section we have a close comparison between a poem in Lewis’s *Great Divorce* and its biblical source by Pierre H. Berube. Ruth Berman (here accomplishing the unique trifecta of appearing in *Mythlore*’s first, one hundredth, and fiftieth anniversary issues) examines Narnian astronomy. One of my unfortunate duties as editor is to commemorate the deaths of people important to the Society and the journal; we note with sorrow the passing of Nancy-Lou Patterson and celebrate her many contributions.

A first for this issue is two extensive review-essays. Barbara Prescott uses Marina Warner’s *Fairy Tale: A Very Short Introduction* as the kernel of a survey of the major scholarship in this field. Jared Lobdell, a giant in Inklings studies who unfortunately passed away in March 2019, enlivened his long review of Sørina Higgins’s edited collection *The Inklings and King Arthur* with digressions and reminiscences. We will print a memorial to him in the Fall 2019 issue. We end as usual with a generous review section.

If you would like to keep up with news relating to *Mythlore*, please follow us on Facebook, where we post advance notice of items accepted for upcoming issues, lists of items available for review, and so forth. The Fall/Winter 2019 issue will be co-edited by *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board member Donna White and will focus on mythopoeic literature for children. In 2020 we plan a special issue co-edited by Melanie Rawls on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin.

In addition to the members of the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, the Mythopoeic Society Council of Stewards, and our ever-dependable referees, I thank David Emerson for his much-appreciated assistance with proofreading. I’d also like to express my gratitude to Phillip Fitzsimmons, Reference and Digitization Librarian at Southwestern Oklahoma State University Libraries and our Administrator for *Mythlore* and Society Archives, who has been directing the team adding archival content to <http://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/>. We also are pleased to welcome new Editorial Advisory Board member Christopher Vaccaro of the University of Vermont.

—Janet Brennan Croft

¹ All submissions to *Mythlore* by editors, board members, and members of the Council of Stewards go through an additional level of anonymous assessment by referees.