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Involvement

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Involvement

Editorial Opening

In This Issue

In this issue of *Mythlore* we have a fair number of Tolkien papers for you. This bounty is the result of the 18th Mythopoeic Conference held at Marquette University this last summer, where, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Hobbit*, Christopher Tolkien was Scholar Guest of Honor. In addition to many excellent Tolkien papers, the conference produced several papers on other fantasy writers such as Mervyn Peake and E.R. Eddison. As a result, we will be able to give you more articles on these writers.

In his paper, Kenneth Reckford observes that there has not been much work done concerning the influence of classical myth and literature on Tolkien. So we are pleased to be able to bring to you two papers dealing with that influence. Kenneth Reckford's paper "There and Back Again" (with a delightful headpiece by Pat Wynne) compares Odysseus and Bilbo. Professor Reckford teaches Greek and Latin literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, including a course on "The Heroic Journey" dealing with Homer, Virgil, Dante, and (of course) Tolkien. In addition to being a member of the Mythopoeic Society, he belongs to the International Wizard of Oz Club. Our other "classical" paper is *"The Silmarillion as Aristotelian Epic Tragedy"* by David Greenman. He received his Ph.D. in 1969 from Indiana University and now is an English Professor at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. He teaches Epic, Romance, and Renaissance literature, and in addition to Tolkien has written articles on Shakespeare. He is also an officer of the Buffalo Branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

Continuing with the Tolkien papers we give you Stephen Deyo's "Wyrd and Will: Fate, Fatalism and Free-will". He has a B.A. in Spanish and Theology, and has completed work for an M.A. in Journalism. He says that his "insatiable interest" in Tolkien began with an independent study class on Tolkien that he took in 1978. He and his wife live in St. Paul, Minnesota. As a contrast to Stephen's paper, we also give you Catherine Madsen's "Light from an Invisible Lamp: Natural Religion in *The Lord of the Rings*." We hope you will find both papers stimulating.

Amongst all this talk of Tolkien we do have a Charles Williams paper. It is "Priestess and Goddess in *The Greater Trumps*" by Donna R. White. A former Air Force brat, she is now working toward a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. This spring she will be in London as a teaching assistant for the University's Literature in London program. She then plans to spend the summer in Wales attending the Intensive Presidential Course for Welsh Learners.

We also have a paper on George MacDonald by John Pennington. He received his Ph.D. from Purdue University last December and is now an assistant professor of English at Valdosta State College. His dissertation explored the subversive tendencies in George MacDonald's fairy tales and fantasies. He says of himself "Originally from Wisconsin, I've slowly gravitated to the South (don't ask me why) where on any given weekend I can go to the nearby swamp and find an alligator."

On a more general subject of interest to readers

of fantasy there is Deanne Westbrook's paper "The Souls of Animals: the Evolution of the Combative Ideal." She is an assistant professor of English at Portland State University, and is currently at work (as co-editor and contributor) on a book on the continuing influence of the mythological North and its traditions. This paper in a modified form will become a part of her chapter on "The Enemy."

Gene Edward Vieth, Jr. gives us "Fantasy and the Tradition of Christian Art." He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas and now is an English professor at Concordia College in Wisconsin. He has also published a book on a subject related to his paper, entitled *The Gift of Art: The Place of the Arts in Scripture*.

This mention of art brings us to a point the staff of *Mythlore* would like all readers to consider. You may note that this issue is a little light on artwork. For the last several years we have been fortunate in having Pat Wynne, Paula DiSante and Sarah Beach contributing artwork quite frequently. But recently each of these artists have had increased demands on their time (indeed, Paula recently entered the Graduate Film program at the University of Southern California), and so are not able to produce as much artwork for each issue as they have in the past. We hope that other artists will take the opportunity to submit their own work. We so want to offer the readers as much of a variety as we can, but we are limited to what we receive. If you have questions about submitting art, please write the Art Editor.

And finally, we have the cover art. The front cover is a pencil drawing by Sue Dawes, who lives in San Diego, California. This drawing of Arwen and Aragorn was a preliminary study for a larger full color painting which the artist displayed in the Art Show of the 18th Mythopoeic Conference. The back cover is by Bonnie GoodKnight Callahan. She has, in the past, frequently contributed artwork to *Mythlore*. She now lives in Pasadena, California with her husband Tim Callahan. Both of the Callahans are artists and writers, and have worked professionally in the animation industry. The tonal qualities of these pictures required some special printing processes, but we felt they were worth the extra cost.

As always, we hope you will enjoy this issue and send us your letters of comment.

Involvement

At the 1987 Mythopoeic Conference I had the opportunity to say in a brief address, printed in *Mythlore* 51, that the wide spectrum of people involved in the Mythopoeic Society is one of its real strengths. This spectrum can be found in a number of ways: in the backgrounds and experience in the members; in the variety of creative talents brought to the Society; in the specific interest shown in the various aspects and activities of the Society; and in the various opinions on how the Society should best function to serve its purpose and members. Some readers may not know that their individual subscription to *Mythlore* automatically makes them a member of the Society. This may not concern them, since to them their

involvement with the Society, if indeed they would put it this way, is solely as a reader of this journal. Attending the annual Mythopoeic Conference, volunteering as a member of the Mythopoeic Fantasy and Scholarship Awards committees, organizing or participating in an affiliated Discussion Group, or considering writing an article, review, letter of comment, or doing artwork for *Mythlore*, among other things, are to be done by "others." I really don't think the Society could presently handle it, if every member did participate in all of these things, except perhaps for the Mythopoeic Conferences. No one should feel obligated to participate in any of these things; it is a matter of individual choice whether one takes part or not. What I am wondering about is what percentage of the readers see the Society as an organization with a variety of things presented for their participation, in other words, a member-oriented Society, and what percentage feel their reading of *Mythlore* as their sole connection with the Society, which is merely the originating source of the journal. I am wondering this in print because whenever a *Mythlore* Questionnaire or a Society ballot is sent out to the readers, the most response we have ever had back has been less than 30%. Perhaps this is typical and normal. I do not have the data on response rates for other organizationally generated publications to make a comparison. Both I as Editor of *Mythlore* and the Board of the Mythopoeic Society, and the other ten members of the Council of Stewards, direct the Society as a member-oriented organization, offering a variety of activities, and I believe we are correct in doing so. In your opinion, is this the right approach? We spend a great deal of time and Society funds pursuing this outlook. Is this meaningful to you, or should we be operating from a different approach, such as focusing more on the aspect or aspects where the majority do show interest? What is your thinking? We strive to do our best, but constantly need input. I am gratified that the vast majority of *Mythlore* subscribers do renew, proving that this journal is of value and interest to you. That show of support for the unique blend of interests and purpose *Mythlore* represents is personally very appreciated.

Editorial Philosophy

I would like to take the opportunity to comment here on what I believe is the proper role of an Editor. This journal should not be, and is not, a vehicle solely for view points and interpretations agreeable to the Editor. If I were to print only articles, reviews, columns, letters, and artwork that first matched 100% my own taste and viewpoint, then *Mythlore* would print very little indeed! A good Editor will take the best material available, and present it the best way possible. Regarding written material I feel if they are well written, making their points in a creditably supported way, with their facts straight, making a contribution to their field, and written in a clear readable style, then they should be published. One of the main reasons for the letter column is to provide opportunity for readers' reaction, to agree, to make distinctions, or to disagree -- mildly or otherwise. I welcome and encourage this reaction. No one should make the mistaken assumption that all material precisely represents this journal's editorial philosophy or speaks for the Mythopoeic Society. One reader observed on the last Questionnaire that the majority of articles are written from either a Christian or Jungian viewpoint. That may be true, as far as it goes, but it should not be casually assumed that such material is given preference over those with other viewpoints. Some material in this issue demonstrates otherwise. Christianity in

the works of Tolkien, Lewis, and Williams is integral to their full study and consideration, and while this is a sensitive area to some, to ignore or sidestep this would be intellectually dishonest. While I do not totally agree with the body of work by the psychologist C.G. Jung, the applicability of his approach and insights to the study of mythic writers is amazingly valid and revealing in a number of ways. It is not surprising that many others are familiar with Jung, and apply his insights to their articles. I would recommend the reading of Jung to those who are not familiar with him, especially *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (as an introduction) and *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. There is very little direct solicitation of articles, because I have learned years ago that good articles cannot be assigned. They are voluntarily produced out of the desire and inspiration of the writer. Given this, we do encourage submissions, and present the best available. I mention all this to clarify what is this Editor's operating philosophy.

We are Indexed...

Mythlore is indexed in the *Modern Languages Association International Bibliography*, the *American Humanities Index*, the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*, *Abstracts of English Studies*, *Current Contents*, and the *Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Index*. Most recently it has published a Subject Index of its first 50 issues, found in issue 51.

Mythopoeic Core Reading List

Mythlore frequently publishes articles that presuppose the reader is already familiar with the works they discuss. This is natural, given the special nature of *Mythlore*. In order to assist some readers, the following is what might be considered a "core" mythopoeic reading list, containing the most well known and discussed works. Due to the many editions printed, only the title and original date of publication are given. Good reading!

J.R.R. Tolkien

The Hobbit (1937); "Leaf by Niggle" (1945); "On Fairy-Stories" (1945); *The Lord of the Rings*: Vol. 1, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954); Vol. II, *The Two Towers* (1954); Vol. III, *The Return of the King* (1955); *The Silmarillion* (1977); *Unfinished Tales* (1980).

C.S. Lewis

Out of the Silent Planet (1938); *Perelandra* (1943); *The Hildebrand Strength* (1945); *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950); *Prince Caspian* (1951); *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952); *The Silver Chair* (1953); *The Horse and His Boy* (1954); *The Magician's Nephew* (1955); *The Last Battle* (1956); *Till We Have Faces* (1956).

Charles Williams

War in Heaven (1930); *Many Dimensions* (1931); *The Place of the Lion* (1931); *The Greater Trumps* (1932); *Shadows of Ecstasy* (1933); *Descent into Hell* (1937); *All Hallow's Eve* (1945); *Taliessin through Logres* (1938); and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944) (printed together in 1954).