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Taking Stock and Going Forward

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Taking Stock and Going Forward

EDITORIAL

Taking Stock and Going Forward

A New Look

Mythlore's new appearance in this issue is due to two typographical elements: specialized type fonts and dingbats. The new font used in the titles is based on the Celtic lettering style of the Book of Kells. This, and other attractive typefaces, were made possible with the aid of the Benefactors, and I express grateful appreciation for their help and encouragement for this improvement. There are other further exciting effects possible that could further enhance visual appearance, should Benefactor support increase. The dingbats – what a peculiar and delightful term – are the geometric and other symbols found on this and other pages. The combination of the new typeface and the dingbats makes possible the symbol found above – a variant of the Mythopoetic emblem.

A New Approach

There is another change in the logical evolution of *Mythlore* that is of even greater importance. It is now to be a "refereed" or "juried" journal. For those who might not be familiar with what this means, let me explain. We will follow a "blind" or anonymous author submissions procedure for articles. Copies of the submitted article will be sent to several of our Editorial Advisors for evaluation, with the identity of the article's author unknown to them. This is to insure that the article will be appraised on its merits alone, not taking into account the identity or background of the author. The reasons and advantages for this are apparent, and will further the goal of making the material published of the highest calibre possible. Four basic criteria will be used: 1. the overall quality of the writing and contribution to the field of knowledge the manuscript covers; 2. Accuracy in the presentation of the facts and references; 3. The logical flow and consistency of the argument; 4. Technical matters related to style. No author need feel intimidated by this new procedure, since they will be assured that their article will be judged simply and strictly on its merits alone, not on the writer's identity, credentials, or position. What more would any sincere writer desire, whether he or she be an academic or private reader; young student or retired person? While this has always been Editorial policy, a Board of Editorial Advisors has been created to consider article submissions, to intensify and expand this critical aspect. We are honored to have the services of these talented and proven experts. This step should be fully implemented with the next issue.

Taking Stock

I am very grateful to all of those of you who filled out and mailed back your copy of the *Mythlore* Questionnaire that was included in Issue 56. The results of the Questionnaire rating of features are presented in two formats, both of which are given.

On a Scale of 1 to 10 (10 being highest)

Feature	scale rating	% responding
Overall 4 issues (32-36)	8.50	79.13%
Articles	8.50	88.48%
Reviews	8.38	82.73%
Tales Newly Told	7.79	70.50%
Letters	7.52	78.91%
Editorials	7.60	81.29%
In This Issue	7.51	60.43%
Art	6.95	93.50%
Quenti Lambardillion	6.82	69.78%
Poetry	6.15	79.13%

Percent of those Responding (of the total responses received)

Feature	% responding	scale rating
Art	93.50%	6.95
Articles	88.48%	8.50
Reviews	82.73%	8.38
Editorials	81.29%	7.60
Overall 4 issues (32-36)	79.13%	8.50
Poetry	79.13%	6.15
Letters	78.91%	7.52
Tales Newly Told	70.50%	7.79
Quenti Lambardillion	69.78%	6.82
In This Issue	60.43%	7.51

If every feature was rated by everyone returning the Questionnaire, the results would probably be somewhat different. There is a spectrum of tastes and preferences in the readers, and this affects their criteria when making their ratings and comments. We try to please as much as it is possible without disaffecting any. This is not always effective, but we try. What is one person's precise fare is unappealing to another. Over 160 individual readers returned their Questionnaires. The scale rating number is an average, and doesn't show the range of numbers for a feature, even if there is a wide variety of ratings for it. As an example, Quenti Lambardillion received more of a mixed response than any other feature. The breakdown of responses (rounded off to the nearest percent) are as follows: Scale: 1-6%, 2-4%, 3-5%, 4-5%, 5-14%, 6-3%, 7-10%, 8-17%, 9-11%, 10-22%. While the majority rated it highly, with more than half giving it an 8 or above, the lower ratings brought the average down to 6.82. This demonstrates that every feature does not please each reader to the same degree, nor can that be realistically expected.

A number of comments on the questions said approximately the same thing. Some of them are given here.

On the question "What aspect of *Mythlore* do you like the best and why?" some of the responses were: Articles – I teach at a university ✱ Very well balanced between art, articles, editorials, reviews, art, letters, etc. ✱ We enjoy the intellectual substance, letters ✱ The solid scholarship – we're not getting drivell. ✱ I like the articles best for the depth of their content and diversity of scope/topics ✱ Articles – intelligent people thinking about interesting

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EDITORIAL



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subjects ✱ Seeing how others respond to LWT ✱ Letters – they let me in on what people are thinking ✱ Articles on the Inklings ✱ Stimulating articles ✱ Book Reviews and Inklings Bibliography; though I cherish the articles, I primarily like them for their guidance in Inklings studies ✱ Devotion to works of Williams, Lewis and Tolkien. Don't become a "Fantasy" organization ✱ The fact it provides a forum for a wide range of skillful well-researched writing. I particularly enjoy authors' reflections on their craft ✱ Scholarly articles – I'm a scholar! ✱ Book Reviews – they let me know about excellent works which otherwise I could easily miss ✱ Art and Articles in a near tie – consistently high quality, significant and thought provoking ✱ Editorials – more personal and ties things together ✱ Quenti Lambardillon and articles dealing with Tolkien linguistics ✱ I enjoy the articles on Tolkien the most. As a former English teacher turned full-time mom of three, I really enjoy reading scholarly articles on literature that I like ✱ Its beautiful graphics, art, layout, and readable design; its evocative typefaces and tasteful covers ✱ The creative and highly energetically written articles ✱ Scholarly articles – enhance my reading of the primary materials ✱ Reviews and editorials they have weight and are helpful ✱ *Mythlore* has almost reached perfection, in my view. In the last year or so there has been dramatic improvement in the aesthetic aspects well as in the range and variety of topics. The editorials, linguistics column, reviews, letters, artwork, and creative writing all combine to make *Mythlore* a complete publication ✱ All of it.

On the question "What aspect of *Mythlore* do you like the least and why?" some of the responses were: I am a very picky person and most of the art seems only to be strained illustration ✱ It's too short ✱ I am not interested as much in Elvish or in recent modern fantasy, but I think other people have other interests than mine and they have rights too! ✱ Too many articles on other writers ✱ Middle-earth linguistics – simply out of place ✱ Poetry is disappointing ✱ Dry, esoteric approach to languages makes my head spin ✱ Art, fannish ✱ Some of the art is amateurish and is not within the academic culture; so my colleagues seeing the art tend to downgrade the publication – not fair but this is what happens! ✱ Other authors ✱ Some of the ill-thought letters we members send ✱ *Mythlore* never causes me to think in terms of "least." Occasionally I find elements in reviews/criticism unpleasant, but that is the nature of criticism ✱ Technical Tolkien articles – but I'm glad they are there anyway ✱ When articles seem too far removed from Lewis, Tolkien and Williams – for example pushing feminism ✱ This questionnaire! ✱ Quenti Lambardillon, only because it is so specialized – but please continue it for those who appreciate it ✱ The dry scholarly tone, lack of humor and delight, heavily biased editorials [at least for this person] ✱ Sometimes the purely technical articles are a bit tedious. I tend to feel that magical things should not be picked to pieces, yet I know how fun it can

be to probe into sources and influences ✱ The art means less than the text to me ✱ The articles that read like College English papers ✱ Jungian articles on Charles Williams ✱ Mythopoeic business ✱ I like every aspect of *Mythlore*.

On the question "What do you think might need improving?" some of the responses were: Nothing in particular – *Mythlore* has an evolutionary way of improving itself anyway ✱ TLW inspired writing ✱ No suggestions ✱ Better proofreading for typos, but this has been improving ✱ More artists – I know this is tough, because you can't force people to contribute if they don't feel like it ✱ Glossy pages without raising the price. Keep it scholarly ✱ Excellent as it is ✱ Broader selection of articles ✱ More letters ✱ Bring it up to a minimum stand of literary competence ✱ Oh, dear, the art and poetry... ✱ refereed articles and art ✱ I'm satisfied ✱ Poetry – surely this belongs mostly in *Mythic Circle* ✱ More pages or more often ✱ The art: much of it is well done, but enough of those effeminate men! And I wish it were possible to draw faces with expression, as if these people had loved and sorrowed ✱ More articles on Charles Williams ✱ Color added to improve issue ✱ The proofreading (I know! I know! Its hard to bat 1000!) ✱ Keep up the good work you're doing.

On the question "What might be added or left out, if anything?" and "Further comments, suggestions, ideas:" some of the responses were: Color ✱ It's a good, sound journal – provides a valuable forum for scholars ✱ I really appreciate the printing of Mythopoeic Conference papers. Those of us who can't go often get the chance to see them ✱ More humor might be fun ✱ More artwork! ✱ Less art (or only the best) ✱ Art and Tales Newly Told left out ✱ Please don't let it get stuffy! ✱ I still feel the tension (between the lines) of the old "Christian vs. Secular" debate between your writers (though it's not as bad now as in the early days!) ✱ I would be adamantly opposed to any move to dilute the Society's emphasis on Lewis/Tolkien/Williams ✱ Present improved typeset format is excellent! Don't leave any feature out.



Again, these are only a few of the responses. If you didn't recognize yours here, please understand. These few comments should give you an "inkling" that an editor who can or attempts to please every reader in every aspect paves a very short road to a nervous breakdown or an institution (not of higher learning)! A number of things suggested have or will be implemented. Constructive criticism is most appreciated. Keep in mind that an editor cannot demand more art, letters, or any other material, nor can we publish what is not submitted. We must work with the material available. The overall response and comments were enthusiastically positive, and this gives me great encouragement. The rule is, one hears silence when things are well received, but the criticism is loud when something is perceived wrong. Because of your manifested involvement and support, I feel a renewed bond and sense of common purpose with you, the readers.

For those who might suppose something different, keep in mind that *Mythlore* is a labor of love for all involved. There is no underwriting institution, such as many journals have. No one is paid, except in contributor's copies, for the work done, except the typists, and they charge a low rate. Because of budget reasons, I have been doing more of the typing myself, so keep in mind the typing is in relation to the rate paid! I have a teaching

career and other responsibilities, doing work on *Mythlore* in the evenings, weekends, and vacations. My recompense is the satisfaction of contributing to the interests of the Society and Journal, and delivering to you, the readers, a product for study, discussion, and enjoyment. For *Mythlore* to be produced under the circumstances it is, I'm very gratified it has reached this point. More can be done, and it will.

Onward and Upward!

— Glen GoodKnight

All the World a Druid's Dream

Ever Spinning the spokes of Silver Hand's wheel
 Burning bright are the sparks of cyric llys Oon
 Pearly the pave of Gwydion's Castle
 Crowned by the boreal lamps of Caer Arianrod
 Thrice seven the thousands of creamy milch cows
 Grazing in Ludd's vast far-flung fields

Tell and swift they course
 down from the misty arec's spine
 Harsh winds the White Lord's hunting horn
 Torment of Battle golden saddled
 Hard scenting the fleetest fleeing soul
 Death's Door the flame-eyed snow-bleak hound
 Heaped sheaves of bones
 chaste pale beneath the storm cloud wings

Tree Tall (the Bard and the Raven) and Fair Blossom
 Gloom weavers the spell of the bone-hive of Hell
 Linked by the heavy blue chain of the Wise
 Half of the seed and half of the Circle
 Dark spawn of Illusion and Phantasy's Master
 Son of the Wave the waves angry lament

Each and forever upon the Beltaine
 That tourney for favor ever unwon
 For pride of the father the maiden prize
 Between the White renowned as the Hunter
 Between the Victor Son of the Scorchers
 Between the prost and the flame of the pre

t. Winter-Damon