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## *The Lamp-Post of the Southern California C.S. Lewis Society*

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## Online Summer Seminar 2023

August 5-6, 2023: Fantasy Goes to Hell: Depictions of Hell in Modern Fantasy Texts

<https://mythsoc.org/oms/oms-2023.htm>



*The Lamp-Post of the Southern California C.S. Lewis Society*

**THE LAMP-POST OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA C.S. LEWIS SOCIETY.** Edited by Laurie Hatch. Volume 36, No. 2, Spring/Summer 2018; Volume 36, No.3, Fall/Winter 2018; Volume 36, No. 4, Winter 2018/ Volume 37, No. 1, Spring 2019. With Society membership, \$24 annually (\$5 students), <http://www.socallewis.org/>.

*The Lamp-Post*, like *MYTHLORE*, HAS A LONG HISTORY in Inklings studies and fandom. Originally a newsletter which started publication in 1977 a few years after the birth of the Southern California C.S. Lewis Society in 1974, it grew into a respectable scholarly vehicle for Lewis and Inklings scholarship. Former editor and current director of the society Jim Prothero told me it is the oldest Lewis journal after the New York C.S. Lewis Society's *Bulletin*. A number of *Mythlore* contributors have published in both journals. *The Lamp-Post* suffered a hiatus in editorship for three years starting in 2014, but is back on a regular publishing schedule as a quarterly (given sufficient material) under Dr. Laurie Hatch, whose first issue was vol. 36, no. 1 in Fall 2017. The issues are pamphlet-sized, staple-bound, and around 48 pages each at present (with the double issue weighing in at 96 pages), and new contributions are welcome. It does not focus exclusively on Lewis, but it does tend to include scholarship with a more distinctly religious bent than *Mythlore*.

The Spring/Summer 2018 issue includes three essays and reprints a William Morris poem. I found Marcus French's essay on contingent reality not truly convincing, but it included some interesting observations on Tolkien's "The Lost Road" and Lewis's Space Trilogy. Daniel Camomile's essay on lessons learned about writing from Lewis's fiction and criticism is brief and chatty but illuminating; certainly Lewis is worth emulating as a creative writer. Sorina Higgins's transcription of her Signum University guest lecture on intertextuality in *Beowulf* and among the Inklings is the best content of this issue, emphasizing the fact that intertextuality requires a "community of interpretation" (40) and demonstrating that "Dragons are, arguably, always intertextual" (33).

The Fall/Winter 2018 issue has only two papers, plus a poem by Joe R. Christopher. The opening paper by Stanley E. Anderson is an excellent discussion of "diminishing neutrality" in *That Hideous Strength*—oppositions becoming more and more distinct—and how this plays out in the balanced "chessboard" structure of opposing characters, events, interactions, and locations throughout the novel. Perry E. Ball's essay on gratitude in Lewis's works is not a scholarly piece, but a useful gathering and assessment of quotations on the topic, from which Lewis's theological philosophy on gratitude can be derived.

The double issue covering Winter 2018 and Spring 2019 includes four conference papers from the March 2019 Pacific Inklings Festival. Michael J.

Paulus explores the important contrast between Charles Williams's theological appreciation of the city as "a divinely ordained project of and for human transformation" (5) with the rejection of technology by Lewis, Tolkien, Sayers, and theologian Jacques Ellul. Williams, in contrast, "developed a constructive theology of technological work" (5) in keeping with the Way of the Affirmation of Images. Useful observations on *The Masques of Amen House* and comparisons with Sayers's theology of work lead to a review of the history of information revolutions and a meditation on artificial intelligence and the apocalyptic imagination.

David Bratman expands on his previous work on C.S. Lewis's letters, here discussing his "endearing and open-hearted habit of writing fan letters to living authors whose works he admired" (22). The letters Bratman considers are to Charles Williams (Lewis's fan letter being the key to bringing him in to the Inklings), E.R. Eddison, T.H. White, and Mervyn Peake. Sorina Higgins's contribution draws heavily on her introductory material for *The Inklings and King Arthur* (reviewed in *Mythlore* #134 by Jared Lobdell) but there is plenty of new material here, particularly on inter-war and post-war Arthuriana and Arthurian mysticism, to make it well worth reading. Jim Prothero completes the issue with an essay on Lewis, Romanticism, and religion, with a strong emphasis on Lewis's long appreciation for and engagement with Wordsworth.

For the bibliographically-inclined, this is a journal which could use a history of publication, checklist of issues, and index of contents, as it is not widely held or indexed and the society's website provides little archival information and no method for ordering back issues. There has been much good material published within, and it would be a boon to Inklings scholarship to see it made more widely accessible.

—Janet Brennan Croft



**FANTASTIC CREATURES IN MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE: FROM MEDIEVAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY.** Juliette Wood. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. 256 p. 9781350059252. \$49.99.

*FANTASTIC CREATURES IN MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE* IS A BROAD STUDY in which Juliette Wood seeks to address certain questions about human imagination and interaction with such creatures as mythical beasts. The material is an encyclopedia of sorts on several fantastic creatures and their historical and current interpretations and uses, along with numerous illustrations to help