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## Editorial

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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>



## Editorial



OUR SECOND COVID-ERA ISSUE is slightly behind schedule not just because of issues related to the pandemic, but because I have changed “my house, my chair, and my college” (as Tolkien put it in the Foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*) in the midst of this pandemic—never an easy transition, but all the more challenging at this time. My apologies.

We start with several Lewis-related papers. In “A Cosmic Shift in *The Screwtape Letters*,” Brenton D.G. Dickieson examines in even more detail the implications of the draft of the introduction to *The Screwtape Letters* (which he first discussed in *Notes and Queries* in 2013) and a previously unpublished Lewis letter to a reader. This draft convincingly repositions *The Screwtape Letters* as part of the Ransom sequence rather than a stand-alone infernal epistolary novel, a major shift in how the Space Trilogy can be understood.

Tiffany E. Schubert’s paper discusses the theme of consolation in Lewis’s *The Silver Chair* and the medieval poem *Pearl*, touching on Dante and Boethius along the way and bringing out hidden depths in this children’s novel.

Andy Gordon looks at several other novels in the Chronicles of Narnia, particularly *The Horse and His Boy* and *The Last Battle*, in his examination of themes of sexual maturity, sensuality, and humiliation, with Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* as a touchstone and comparison.

Joseph Rex Young returns to his exploration of George R.R. Martin’s Song of Ice and Fire series, this time looking explicitly at Martin’s dwarf characters (Tyrion Lannister is not the only one) with a Bakhtinian focus on bodily grotesquerie, carnival inversion, and truth-telling.

Philip Pullman’s *The Golden Compass* is next considered in its several incarnations—as novel, movie, and game—in Douglas A. Barnim’s paper on the use of myth in adaptation and interactivity.

In my introduction to the last issue, I noted how rare it was to find anything new to say about the question of Tom Bombadil. Here we have yet one more paper on the topic: Dani Inkpen delves into Tom’s position as an objective observer of his own world, backing up this interpretation with a history of the philosophy of science and the scientific method, and more precisely, the definition of scientific objectivity that would have been familiar to Tolkien.

Three more papers on Tolkien follow. Kathryn Colvin's "Her Enchanted Hair" is a fascinating study of the hair-mad Victorians, especially the Pre-Raphaelites, and the depiction of women's hair in poetry and art of the period (for good and evil). It's clear that Tolkien's work draws on these influences.

Lukasz Neubauer's paper on the friendship of Polish scholar Przemysław Mroczkowski and J.R.R. Tolkien, and Mroczkowski's reviews of and scholarship on Tolkien's work, fills a gap in our understanding of Tolkien's continental influence.

Our final paper examines Tolkien's complex relationship with medieval concepts of knighthood, both as a scholar and as demonstrated in the pages of his fiction. Ben Reinhard picks apart the relationship Tolkien finds between knighthood and *ofermod* in works including *The Lord of the Rings* and *Farmer Giles of Ham*. As usual, the articles are followed by an extensive section of reviews of new and recent noteworthy books.

The upcoming special issue on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin, guest edited by Melanie Rawls, has been moved to Spring 2021 and the deadline extended. The Mythopoeic Press volume on cities in Middle-earth, edited by Cami Agan, is also still in need of submissions; please see the calls for papers at the end of this issue. Please also note that we have two openings on the Council of Stewards: an immediate need for a Recording Secretary and an upcoming transition for the Awards Administrator. You will also find ads for these posts in this issue.

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. In addition to the members of the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, the Mythopoeic Society Council of Stewards, and our ever-dependable referees, 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/>, and to his assistant Ben Dressler. My thanks also to David L. Emerson for eagle-eyed proofreading.

—Janet Brennan Croft