



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 39
Number 2

Article 21

April 2021

Editorial

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Recommended Citation

Croft, Janet Brennan (2021) "Editorial," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 39: No. 2, Article 21.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol39/iss2/21>

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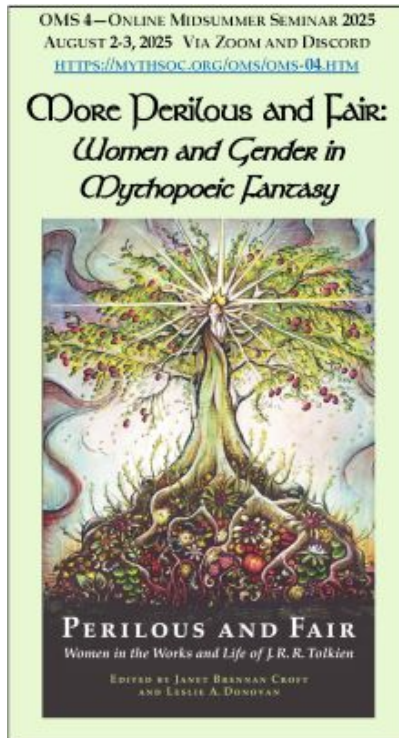
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Via Zoom and Discord

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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

WELCOME TO OUR SPECIAL ISSUE honoring Ursula K. Le Guin, one of the most consistently important voices in fantasy and science fiction since her first appearances in print in the early 1960s. Melanie A. Rawls proposed and guest-edited this issue, and her introduction to Le Guin and to the essays and notes included follows this editorial.

The Language of the Night (1979) was quite possibly my first introduction to the concept that science fiction and fantasy, literatures that I had loved and devoured at a prodigious rate for years, could be the subject of serious literary and cultural criticism at a sustained length. I was a high school senior when the first edition came out, and had only just begun to grapple with literary criticism in my English classes. Here was someone who read widely, thought profoundly, and took my favorite genres and books deeply seriously. *The Language of the Night* has been part of my “leaf-mould” ever since. As I reread it while working on this issue, it struck me how much of my own thinking about Tolkien, about the psychological and developmental uses of mythology, fantasy, and science fiction, about gender, about ethics, and about what distinguishes good writing from bad, have roots in Le Guin’s essays. And Le Guin’s revisions for the second edition (1989), as Rawls points out at more length in her own introduction, are a fine model for how to reconsider and update one’s own early works and opinions with grace, wisdom, and humor.

A technical note: since there are many editions of the Earthsea books, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and other Le Guin titles, most references will be given in the format *chapter.page*, consistent with this journal’s practice for editions of often-reprinted works by Tolkien and Lewis.



The global COVID-19 epidemic has not left our community of scholars, creators, and friends of mythopoeic literature untouched. We have experienced many losses, from COVID and other causes, in the six months since our last issue. Richard C. West’s death in November 2020 was a particular blow to *Mythlore* and to the Mythopoeic Society; see the memorial note in this issue.

Walter Hooper passed away due to COVID-19 in December 2020. Hooper served as C.S. Lewis’s literary secretary for a brief period near the end of Lewis’s life, but it was his ongoing work as Lewis’s literary executor that cemented his contributions to the field. Hooper edited some thirty collections of

Lewis's writings, annotated four volumes of Lewis's letters, and wrote a biography and other works about Lewis, including his 1997 *C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide*.

We also lost literary critic Colin Manlove in June 2020. His *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies* (1975) launched a long career of literary criticism which eventually included books on individual authors C.S. Lewis, J.K. Rowling, and George MacDonald, as well as books on Christian fantasy, children's fantasy, Scottish fantasy, and other topics, many reviewed in *Mythlore*.

Artist Adam Victor Christensen passed away in March 2021. His delicate pen and ink illustrations and calligraphy were a beloved feature of the publications of the Elvish Linguistic Fellowship, a special interest group of the Mythopoeic Society. He is survived by his partner Christopher Gilson, editor and publisher of *Parma Eldalamberon*.



Please see the announcement about the 2021 Mythcon in this issue. As we go to press, we are working out the details, but we plan to hold a virtual conference with the potential for a small in-person gathering for those who feel comfortable traveling by late July. Registration is \$20.00 for all attendees. We look forward to being able to once again grant the Alexei Kondratiev Award for the best student paper presented this year.

Mythlore is delighted to be able to welcome Douglas A. Anderson to the journal's board. Anderson is an independent scholar known particularly for his annotated editions of *The Hobbit* (1988, 2002) and the descriptive bibliography of Tolkien's work that he co-authored with Wayne G. Hammond (2002). The Mythopoeic Society also welcomes two new Stewards: Dennis Wilson Wise, who has contributed essays and reviews to *Mythlore* over the past several years, will join us as the Awards Administrator when Vicki Ronn steps down later this year, and Holly Felmlee has already taken up the duties of Recording Secretary. This returns the Council of Stewards to its full strength.

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 continuing 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 and for keeping the editor properly caffeinated.

—Janet Brennan Croft