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Editorial

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Online MidSummer Seminar 2025

More Perilous and Fair: Women and Gender in Mythopoeic Fantasy

August 2-5, 2024

Via Zoom and Discord

<https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-04.htm>



Editorial

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MythLORE

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WITH A NICE ROUND DOZEN OF ARTICLES, two Notes, and a long list of reviews, there's plenty of variety in this issue of *Mythlore*!

We start with the Mythcon 52 Scholar Guest of Honor speech given by the estimable David Bratman—a sort of tasting menu of five mini-talks on topics Tolkienian and otherwise, to whet the appetite and perhaps inspire other scholars to take up the themes he's set forth.

We'll take a break from the Inklings next and visit with several other authors. David Lindsay, whose first novel *A Voyage to Arcturus* is often cited as a source (if perhaps in the "anxiety of influence" sense) for C.S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet*, wrote other novels as well, and Eric Wills here examines the religio-philosophical underpinnings of his posthumously published *The Violet Apple*.

Matthew Oliver's paper on Robin Hobb's *Assassin's Apprentice* looks at two intersecting stylistic techniques used in this fantasy novel—epigraphs and the story-telling equivalent of negative space—and how they support the thematic aims of the writer.

The next paper also takes examines stylistic techniques, their effects, and their broader implications. Catherine Olver explores the use of sound and background noise, and the ecocritical implications of sound, in two popular young adult fantasy series: Garth Nix's Old Kingdom series (1995-2021) and Patrick Ness's Chaos Walking trilogy (2008-10). George R.R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire series is the subject of our next paper, in which Elisabeth Brander traces the medieval fascination with exotic traveler's tales to their modern home in fantasy literature.

We next turn to the Inklings, and a sub-theme of horror which winds through and unites several of the next group of papers—appropriate as this issue arrives shortly before Hallowe'en. Mikaela von Kursell leads off by examining instances of more or less multiple or split personalities in Charles Williams's *All Hallows' Eve* and C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*.

Camilo Peralta explores a "delight in horror" seemingly shared by Charles Williams and Russel Kirk, with *War in Heaven* the Williams text in question and compared with Kirk's *Lord of the Hollow Dark*. Serendipitously,

Kirk's thoughts on horror and religion provide the framework that leads off our next paper, in which G. Connor Salter surprisingly but rewardingly compares C.S. Lewis's penchant for body horror, particularly in *That Hideous Strength* and *The Dark Tower*, with the horror films of Terence Fisher.

Film is also the subject of the next paper; here, Anne-Frédérique Mochel-Caballero takes a close look at the recent film adaptations of the first three books of Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* and how they depict girls and women in battle. Then we return more directly to the monstrous with Catherine Hall's intriguing look at the twinning of monsters and heroes in *Beowulf* and *The Hobbit*.

Tolkien is also the focus of the final two papers in this issue, as we move away from horror and the monstrous to the pastoral (and yet, as always, remember that *et in arcadia ego* . . .). Clare Moore finds echoes of the ambiguous Morgan le Fay in both Luthien and Aredhel in Tolkien's *Silmarillion*, and MG Prezioso explores the uniquely forward-looking nature of Tolkien's engagement with the pastoral.

In our first Note, Reginald Weems returns with a further exploration of C.S. Lewis's early life, here introducing us to his nurse Lizzie Endicott and her lasting influence on his life. And David Bratman provides a sort of coda to his Guest of Honor address with a lesson in how to read Sam's words at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Some outstanding new books have been published recently, and our lengthy review section is sure to expand your to-be-read list.

The Mythopoeic Society's first Online Midwinter Seminar was a success, and will be repeated in January 2023 with the theme "Fantasy Goes to Hell"; follow our social media or visit the society's website for updates, and watch for the resulting special issue of *Mythlore* in Fall 2022.

If you would like to keep up with news relating to *Mythlore*, please follow us on Facebook, where we post advance notice of papers 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 dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/, and to his assistant Ben Dressler. My thanks also to David L. Emerson for moral support, eagle-eyed proofreading and quote-checking, and keeping the editor optimally caffeinated.

—Janet Brennan Croft