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Editorial

Theodore James Sherman

Thanks to all of you who have spread the word about the revival of *Mythlore* or who have shared copies of the journal, *Mythlore* has recently added over fifty new subscribers. Please continue to promote *Mythlore* among your friends and colleagues.

This issue of *Mythlore* has a little bit of something for everyone. It includes articles on our three major authors—J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams—as well as works on a variety of authors and more general themes in mythopoeic literature. Moreover, this issue contains essays by some authors not previously published in *Mythlore* as well as authors well known to *Mythlore* readers and Mythopoeic Society members.

In the first essay—“Is Man a Myth? Mere Christian Perspectives on the Human”—Donald T. Williams explores the nature of humanity from the perspectives provided us by G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien. In doing so, Professor Williams forces us to consider such difficult questions as “why are we here” and “what is our purpose,” questions which Philip Pullman also raises (and answers strikingly differently) in his *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

Eric Rauscher explores the transformation of Dubric into Taliessin in his article “From Dubric to Taliessin: Charles Williams’s Work on the Arthurian Cycle.” Rauscher’s is the second essay to discuss Williams’s Arthurian manuscript in *Mythlore* this year; whereas Georgette Versinger’s article (“The Commonplace Book: Charles Williams’s Early Approach to the Arthurian Poetry,” *Mythlore* 22.3 [Winter 1999]: 38-54) emphasized a description of Williams’s Arthurian manuscript, Rauscher’s essay focuses on two characters in the manuscript and how the first, Dubric, gradually recedes in importance in Williams’s thinking about the Arthur story and finally is transformed into the second, Taliessin.

The third essay, Dominic Manganiello’s “*Till We Have Faces*: From Idolatry to Revelation,” fascinatingly examines the “face” image and theme in Lewis’s novel and relates it to use of the “face” image and theme in a much broader

literary context. Demonstrating not only wide reading but also excellent scholarship, Professor Manganiello ranges the literary landscape from St. Augustine to Oscar Wilde, with side diversions to numerous authors and critics (Buber, Dante, Kristeva, Lacan, MacDonald, Nietzsche, among many others) as he argues that “Only by transcending herself can she [Orual] become fully human and start a New Life.”

Verlyn Flieger suggests—in “J. R. R. Tolkien and the Matter of Britain”—that, contrary to what he said, Tolkien modeled his own legendarium on the Arthurian story. She clearly shows that Tolkien did not model his mythology on the medieval Matters of Greece/Rome and Charlemagne, nor even on Norse or Anglo-Saxon literature. Through close comparison, Professor Flieger clearly demonstrates that Tolkien had the Matter of Britain in mind as he worked on his legendarium.

The final essay in this issue, Cath Filmer-Davies’s “On Fantasy Stories,” is much akin to Tolkien’s own “On Fairy-Stories” essay, for they both address the issue of the value of stories. In his essay, Tolkien asserts that “the prime value of fairy-stories will simply be that value which, as literature, they share with other literary forms” (*The Tolkien Reader* [New York: Ballantine, 1966] 45-46), but he does not elaborate on what “that” value is, although he does discuss the particular things that he suggests fairy-stories offer: fantasy, recovery, escape, and consolation. Professor Filmer-Davies, on the other hand, elaborates on the value that fantasy stories (and indeed all literature) have. She asserts that their value “is, as sociological and enculturating strategies, in the creation and exchange of meaning, and as a means of empowerment to writers and readers equally.”

Finally, this issue of *Mythlore* brings back book reviews: we present reviews written by Nancy-Lou Patterson of three books: *The C. S. Lewis Reader’s Encyclopedia*; *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*, vol. 3; and *Roverandom*.

The next issue of *Mythlore* is dedicated entirely to C. S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*. It will include essays on the correct order for reading the *Chronicles of Narnia*; atonement in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; iconography in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; and allusions to or suggestions of Mt. Purgatory in the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

We still need additional submissions for the 2001 issues, so please pass the word among your friends and colleagues.