

Kevin Hensler

A New Consideration of Gender and in the works of Tolkien with Consideration of Literary and Mythological Analogs

This paper considers the role gender and gender roles play in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and the characters and societies he has created within his legendarium. Particular attention is given to those characters who seem to defy gender-norm expectations of their own fictional culture, e.g. Eowyn. Great attention is also given to the role gender plays for beings that have no biological sex, i.e. the Valar and Maiar. Apparently all of these entities choose to manifest themselves as gendered beings and none ever seem to change their manifested gender. Via exploration of these, and related topics, this paper aims to better understand how Tolkien thought about gender, and to assess his thoughts on the subject.

Kevin Hensler is a doctoral student for Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Cultures at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He is also a lifelong Tolkien fan. Most of his work focuses mostly on ancient Near Eastern mythology, but he is pleased to use the skills he has developed working in his field to dig deeper into the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.



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