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Editorial

Janet Brennan Croft
University of Oklahoma

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Editorial



EDITORIAL

READERS MAY NOTICE SEVERAL CHANGES with this issue of *Mythlore*. First, we have simplified the numbering of *Mythlore*, reclassifying the journal as a semiannual. Thus this issue is volume 32, issue 1, whole number 123.

This is also the first issue where individual subscribers will have the option for electronic delivery of *Mythlore*. As with *Mythprint*, subscribers who choose this option will be sent a link for a PDF download. This option will not be available for institutions at this time. The cost is \$25.00 for non-members and \$15.00 for Mythopoeic Society members, world-wide. It can also be bundled with the print version; see our website for full pricing details.

I'd also like to welcome John W. Houghton to the *Mythlore* Advisory Board. Rev. Houghton is Chaplain and Chair of the Religious Studies Department at The Hill School, and a long-time Mythopoeic Society member who has published widely on J.R.R. Tolkien and other topics.

We are sorry to report the death of Ann Petty in July 2013. Her *One Ring to Bind Them All: Tolkien's Mythology* (1984, reprinted 2002) was an important contribution to Tolkien scholarship. In recent years, she founded Kitsune Books (alas, now closed) which published *The Mythological Dimensions of Doctor Who* and *The Mythological Dimensions of Neil Gaiman* (reviewed in *Mythlore* #119/120).

We lead with the Scholar Guest of Honor speech from this year's Mythcon, Doug Anderson's fascinating talk on British literary fantasy in the brief period just after the Cottingly fairy photographs episode. In addition to describing some very interesting rarities, Anderson also offers some speculations on the effects of the controversy on Tolkien's early development as a writer.

Another of the high points of this year's conference was Verlyn Flieger's lively presentation on Tolkien's trees. She takes as her departure point a passage on tree-spirits in one of the manuscripts for "On Fairy-Stories," and considers the development of Tolkien's ideas about more-or-less enspirited trees throughout his *oeuvre*.

It's been a while since we had an article on Madeleine L'Engle. Cara-Joy Steem's contribution examines the theme and spiritual functions of listening in the third Murry family novel, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*.

The student paper award at this year's Mythcon went to Megan Abrahamson for "J.R.R. Tolkien, Fanfiction, and 'The Freedom of the Reader.'" Abrahamson makes a particularly convincing case for the validity of fanfiction by

applying Tolkien's own statements about both the "dominion of the author" and the "Cauldron of Story" to the issue.

In "Troy and the Rings," Michael Livingston asserts that, far from abandoning his early grounding in the classics upon discovering Northern mythology and languages, Greek and Roman motifs remained an important element of Tolkien's "soup" and he used them in many ways in *The Lord of the Rings*. Livingston pays particular attention here to themes, characters, incidents, and Mediterranean history that have roots in *The Iliad*.

Jamie McGregor's essay on the heraldry of Middle-earth studies a set of images that Tolkien deploys with great skill to represent essential thematic elements of the opposition between the forces of the Alliance and the Enemy. McGregor's observations on the White Hand of Saruman are particularly valuable in showing how Tolkien revealed the wizard's duplicity even at the symbolic level.

Those who attended my *in absentia* reading of Catherine Madsen's paper at Mythcon will be pleased to see it in print. She pulls together three exceedingly disparate elements—the theology of the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, the way the Inuit peoples relate to the physical and spiritual world, and incidents of self-sacrifice in Tolkien—into a challenging and rewarding whole.

And appropriately, as we head into the winter months, we close with Kris Swank's paper on the intertwined effects that Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and the letters he wrote to his children in the person of Father Christmas may have had on each other. She tracks the development of several motifs that appear throughout Tolkien's works, like irascible wizards, playful elves, impudent bears, and fireworks.

Items reviewed in this issue include: *The International Relations of Middle-earth: Learning from The Lord of the Rings* by Abigail E. Ruane and Patrick James; *Moments of Grace and Spiritual Warfare in The Lord of the Rings* by Anne Marie Gazzolo; *The Wizard of Oz as American Myth: A Critical Study of Six Versions of the Story, 1900-2007* by Alissa Burger; *Plain to the Inward Eye: Selected Essays on C.S. Lewis* by Don W. King; *Tolkien's Poetry*, edited by Julian Eilmann and Allan Turner; *The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia* by Rowan Williams; *C. S. Lewis – A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet* by Alister McGrath; and current issues of *Seven*, *Supernatural Studies*, *Fastitocalon*, and *Wormwood*.

In addition to the members of the Mythlore Advisory Board, I would also like to thank John Rateliff, Carol Liebiger, Deborah Sabo, David Oberhelman, Jason Fisher, Nancy Martsch, and Carl Hostetter, as well as Sarah Gail Croft, who assisted with copy editing.

—Janet Brennan Croft