



# Mythcon 51

## A Virtual “Halfling” Mythcon

July 31 - August 1, 2021

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## A Welcome Note From the Co-Chair

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Nothing “halfling” about it in the end, this year we are presenting fifty papers, panels, roundtables, and alternative programming for your Mythopoeic enjoyment.

2020 was a rough year for literally the whole world, and not just because we had to reschedule Mythcon 51. Many of us found ourselves turning to our favorite books for solace, not just academic interest, in the past year. We never could have expected to be hosting Mythcon 51 virtually, but already I’m thrilled about the silver linings that a virtual conference brings:

- Greater international attendance, with presenters and attendees from all over the world!
- Reduced cost (in money, time, carbon footprint) to presenters, the Society, attendees, and institutions, allowing, again, more diversity of people to attend,
- The opportunity to record sessions easily, without any extra setup, for Mythopoeic posterity,
- The chance to share new media with each other through the affordances of technology, and
- The “nudge out the door” (even without pocket handkerchiefs!) into the twenty-first century as the Mythopoeic Society increases our digital presence (and international reach).

It’s not really a silver lining, but simply getting to see, hear, and chat with fellow Mythies, even virtually, after two years of not being with them, is going to be 100% better than nothing!

A huge thank-you to the team that made this possible: Leslie A. Donovan, my Co-Chair, who helped with so much of the organizing I can’t even list it all; Cami Agan who, with Leslie and me, organized these exciting sessions you have to look forward to; Jessica Dickinson Goodman, for her help with the technical side of Zoom and Discord and sharing her expertise in holding virtual conferences; Alicia Fox-Lenz, for also doing too many things to name, but among them creating and curating our great social media spaces, as well as creating the art for the conference and beautifying the program and schedule; Lynne Darga for handling registration and wrestling MailChimp for me, as well as coming up with not just one but two killer trivia games; Tim Lenz for helping out with organizing, and hosting so much of the fun programming for this Con. Thanks also to Janet Brennan Croft, David Emerson, Holly Felmlee, Nyssa Gilkey, Phillip Fitzsimmons, David Lenander, Cait Rottler, Joan Marie Verba, and Dennis Wise for additional assistance with Zoom, alternative programming, and more. And finally, thanks to all of you who are attending, presenting, or participating! I know this Mythcon won’t be “the same,” but it definitely wouldn’t happen without all of you.

Mythically Yours,

Megan Abrahamson  
*Co-Chair of Mythcon 51*

## About the “Halfling” Mythcon

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### Program Schedule

Click the above link to access the Schedule of events. Note all times are in Mountain Daylight Time (UTC -6). Click on the hyperlinked times in the Schedule to see what time that is for you. **Zoom links are included in the [Schedule](#), emailed to attendees, and on Discord in the #track channels.**

You’ll see we have organized the programming into three tracks: Yellow (Track 1), Green (Track 2), and Blue (Track 3). They are not themed, so each track has a good mix of content.

### Zoom: This Year’s Conference Medium

Many of us got very familiar with Zoom over the past year. Whether we like it or not, it has become the most widely used platform for virtual conferencing, and the Mythopoeic Society has joined the twenty-first century in purchasing a Pro suite for this conference.

We have organized the conference into several “tracks”—just like you’d have different “rooms” where you would attend programming at an in-person conference. For this conference, this means you have three Zoom links as stand-ins for the different rooms, which you will simply click on to access, and you’ll pop in and out of them depending on the programming you’re interested in.

Each session, whether a panel, paper, or roundtable, will have a volunteer Tech Mod, someone standing by to assist with Zoom and help the session run smoothly.

### **Recording Sessions**

Zoom allows us the benefit of filming sessions, both for Mythopoeic Society posterity and to allow attendees to view sessions scheduled against each other at a later date. Presentations marked as “[Recorded]” in the schedule will be stored on our Mythopoeic Society repository through [SWOSU](#), and made temporarily available to conference members after the conference. Details on how to access archived recordings will be provided by email after the conference closes, but you can keep an eye on our [YouTube](#) account for clips and highlights!

### Discord: This Year’s Virtual Conference “Space”

The Mythopoeic Society has had our own server on Discord since 2020. For this conference, we have added Conference-Only areas that only registered members can see.

So, instead of checking into a physical hotel, check out our Discord server!

You can attend this conference without getting involved in the Discord. Registered members can access the same Zoom links through the Schedule. However, we think Discord will make Mythcon 51 a much richer experience. Discord users will be able to converse between panels, either chatting by instant message text or by opening up a video chat with friends, while Zoom-only users will have to “vacate” the space after their panel, paper, or roundtable. Discord users can share links, continue conversations or start new ones, and get reminders in real time

about when panels are beginning. In short, you don't have to join us on Discord, but we hope you will.

## Help with Tech

We are hosting two Tech-Check Hours (posted on the [Schedule](#)) for anyone concerned about Zoom or Discord. If that's you, we hope you will attend!

If you prefer to teach yourself, we've put together a few helpful [links on Zoom and Discord here](#), as well as a [thorough guide to Discord here](#).

Once the conference has begun, Discord will be the best place to ask for help, as we have a #help channel specifically devoted to that. Simply navigate to the left-hand navigation bar or swipe to the left in the app, find the room or channel labeled “#help” and ask your question there.

You can also email our committee members for assistance, though please be patient with us as we will simultaneously be running the conference:

Mythcon Co-Chair Megan Abrahamson at [mythprint@mythsoc.org](mailto:mythprint@mythsoc.org)

Mythcon Co-Chair Leslie Donovan at [mythpress@mythsoc.org](mailto:mythpress@mythsoc.org)

Social Media Steward Alicia Fox-Lenz at [communications@mythsoc.org](mailto:communications@mythsoc.org)

Discord helper Jessica Dickinson Goodman at [jessica.dickinson.goodman@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.dickinson.goodman@gmail.com)

We hope you will contact us early or utilize the optional Tech Check drop-in hours if you feel you need to work out any logistics or ask any questions in advance.

## Mythcon Programming As Usual

**Bardic Circle** will be held both evenings, on Zoom (the “Track 2” link) or on Discord, as preferred by participants. There is a text chat channel available on Discord for planning (#bardic-circle). Hosted by David Lenander.

**The 2021 Edition Of The Not Very Annual Mary M. Stolzenbach Memorial Clerihew Contest.** “Halfling Mythcon” celebrants are invited to participate in the timeless (pretty quick, actually) poetical rubric of the Clerihew in our Not Very Annual Clerihew Contest, named in honor of the late Mary Stolzenbach, who used to sweep the awards regularly. Invented, maybe, by E. Clerihew Bentley over a century ago, the Clerihew is a four-line verse that rhymes AABB. The first line consists of a proper name. The second line must end with a full stop (period, question mark, exclamation point). The third and fourth lines say something about the subject of the first line. As shown below, scansion and regular meter are unimportant. Categories are Before Tolkien (up to 1892), During Tolkien (1892-1973), and After Tolkien (1973-2005). For example:

(Before) Sir Lancelot

Wore iron pants a lot.

Talk about sex appeal!

Real buns of steel!

(During) Peregrine Took

Was not exactly a crook.

But if while walking in the fields of Farmer Maggott

He found a mushroom, he'd bag it.

(After) Tom Shippey

Is a speaker both wise and quippy.

In a bold critical venture, he

Declared Tolkien the author of the century.

Entries should be submitted by email to [webmaster@mythsoc.org](mailto:webmaster@mythsoc.org), with a maximum of three entries per contestant. Please designate which category each entry should belong to (although judges will make the final decision in case of confusion). Make sure your full name is clearly stated somewhere in the email. Submissions must be received by 8:00pm MDT Saturday. A distinguished panel of judges, They Who Must Never Be Named, will be given anonymized entries and will evaluate each based on the HOC criteria of Humor, Originality, and Clerihewness. Winners in each category will be announced at the Members Meeting on Sunday afternoon and rewarded with the traditional prize of a virtual jeroboam of Chateau de Porteur d'Anneau invisible champagne.

Of course the **Consuite** will be open for text chat in between sessions and breaks. Discord can also host video chats, so there are three consuite rooms available for chatting with Mythies we haven't seen in over a year. A great benefit to Discord is that you can "see," indicated by icons and names, who is in a chat room before you join in. This year, sadly, you must BYOB.

The **Dealer's Room** will be open the whole conference, and won't even require minding, so you won't have to miss a single panel! Drop links to your online shops, new books, and mythopoeic businesses in the #dealer's-room-and-artist's-gallery Discord channel.

**Member's Meeting & Closing Ceremonies** are the last official programming of Mythcon (even though we're going to party afterward with Bardic Circle, LOTRO, and a Film) held from [4:30 PM - 6:00PM](#) Mountain Daylight Time on Sunday (in the Yellow/Track 1 Zoom link). This year the Member's Meeting/Closing Ceremonies will take on a lot of the work the **Banquet** usually does, as we'll announce the Mythopoeic Awards Finalists, Alexei Kondratiev Award Winner, Clerihew Winners, plans for next year, and more. "Drunken Hobbit" verses will be write-in in the Zoom chat to avoid the problem of trying to sing together remotely.

**Mythcon Reports** are published in *Mythprint*, the society's quarterly newsletter, after Mythcon. Send a review or report of the Virtual "Halfling" Mythcon to Megan Abrahamson at [mythprint@mythsoc.org](mailto:mythprint@mythsoc.org) for publication up to a month after the conference.

**Opening Ceremonies** will take the form of a short introductory video from the conference organizers, which will be available on our [SWOSU repository](#) Saturday morning. Attendees are

invited to (safely!) take a short procession around your home while viewing the introductory video to recreate the feeling of our usual procession across the campus or through the hotel.

## Programming

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### Paper Titles and Abstracts

*All Mythcon programming will be hosted in “Meeting” mode—so you can allow other Mythcon attendees to see and hear you even as an observer. You may be asked to mute yourself and turn off your camera during the presentation. Be aware of presentations that are being filmed and mute/hide yourself accordingly. Please be courteous to presenters and adhere to the Community Guidelines. Instructions and best practices for presenters [can be found here](#).*

#### **Adam’s Task: Naming and Sub-creation in *Good Omens*. Janet Brennan Croft**

Names are, in one sense, the outward indication of a power negotiation. The *namer*, the one who bestows a new name or uses an already-given name, reveals, through the choice of name they give or use, their relationship to that which they *name*. The act may indicate a more or less equal relationship; it may be an attempt to exert power over someone or something by imposing a name on it or by using a name that will influence those who hear it; or it may be a signal of submission and subordination, using a name to flatter or placate someone or something more powerful. In Genesis 2, naming is the first officially delegated sub-creational task, for God does not name the animals, but brings them before Adam to see what he will call them. All humans have the power to name, to rename, to take a new name, to give a nickname, to deny a name, to deadname . . . and *Good Omens*, book and show alike, is rife with significant acts of naming by both humans and other powers, from Crowley renaming himself Crowley to the constantly changing self-claimed sobriquets of the Four Other Horsemen. Adam Young, though, has this power in spades. Reality bends to his will, and his acts of naming \*stick\* and change what he names. While other name stories will be examined in this paper, the naming acts I will concentrate on will be the naming of Adam himself, Adam’s naming of the hell-hound as he comes into his power, and his climactic act (in the show) of naming Satan to be *not* his father, and thereby making it so.

#### ***Etiam periere ruinae*: Classical Sources for Lovecraft’s Temporal Other. El Hudson**

As Caesar, the questionable protagonist of the first-century Latin epic the *Pharsalia*, navigates the ruins of once-mighty Troy, the poet Lucan pauses to note that *etiam periere ruinae*: “even the ruins have perished.” Would that such were the case in H.P. Lovecraft’s *The Shadow Out of Time*, in which an antediluvian city vexes the protagonist to nightmare. Lovecraft is notorious for his ruins: Cyclopean and/or non-Euclidean, they near-invariably contain horrors from the depths of time, lying in wait for some foolish adventurer to unleash them upon the present. Sometimes these places are simply set-dressing, but in a few notable instances Lovecraft utilizes the notion of the ruin itself to evoke horror. In both the novella *At the Mountains of Madness* and the short story “The Shadow out of Time,” Lovecraft uses the image of the ancient ruin to evoke the terror of deep time: the idea that the scope of history is far larger than we can



comprehend, and human civilization is so small within that scope as to be insignificant. Magnifying the de-centering effect of Lovecraft's timescales, the denizens of these ruins don't stay in the past: they explode into the present with necromantic vigor, and consequently they affect the collapse of any meaningful construction of time. Horrors from both the far future and the far past intrude upon the fragile present: the distinctions blur together, and rational temporal progression becomes impossible. Scholars of Lovecraft have argued that the purpose of this temporal collapse is to amplify the effects of deep-time horror: not only are we insignificant within history, but *history itself* is only an illusion. I believe that we can take this line of thinking further by examining several scenes from classical poetry which utilize a remarkably similar technique—specifically, those in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, a Roman epic poem which shares much of Lovecraft's cosmic outlook. Caesar's tale of Troy in *Pharsalia* IX, Julia's necromantic fury and Caesar's invasion of Rome in *Pharsalia* III, and Erichtho's prophecy in *Pharsalia* VI each use the visual touchstone of the ruined city to trouble the boundaries between the past, present, and future. But where Lovecraft is interested in evoking horror, Lucan is interested in deconstructing specifically Roman histories, which rely on the exclusion of a non-Roman Other to maintain their integrity. By collapsing time, Lucan de-centers Rome from history and then elides it entirely, allowing its replacement by the Other in question. Similarly, Lovecraft's temporal collapse uses the terror of the (non-human, rather than non-Roman) Other to drive home the impression of ultimate human insignificance. The horror is found not only in the sheer scope of cosmic time, but also in the presence of *those who are not us* on that timescale. We rely on time to construct history, and on history to construct an identity that differentiates us from the Other: with the dissolution of time our tools to maintain our sense of self dissolve also, and we are left adrift.

**Faerie Reality in *The Spiral Dance* by Rodrigo Garcia y Robertson. Robert Tredray** Garcia y Robertson's *The Spiral Dance* begins as a historical novel set in the time of the rebellion led by the Earl of Northumberland and the Earl of Westmoreland against Elizabeth I in 1569, told from the point of view of Anne, Countess of Northumberland. It is also an epic or heroic fantasy; besides Lady Anne, two of its main characters are a werewolf named Jock and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Their adventures carry them not only to the highlands of Scotland but to the realm of Faerie. The author's theme is that one must lose all one has before one can be truly transformed—or, to put it another way, before one can discover one's true self. It may be read as an extended meditation on the nature of reality and illusion, and the discovery of true identity. Thus it is a classic Quest tale. Like Bilbo Baggins, Anne goes “there and back again,” and returns changed. So have heroes from Gilgamesh to Odysseus to Sir Gawain to Luke Skywalker. But the author's original contribution to this genre is his conception of Faerie. We are accustomed to think of the ordinary world as real, and of Faerie as the land of illusion. But in Garcia y Robertson's fictional universe, the ordinary world is a place of illusion, where things are seldom what they seem, and Faerie is the realm of reality, where illusion is impossible, and all things are seen for what they really are. In this paper I shall explore how the author uses this conceit to pursue his theme, with references to J. R. R. Tolkien and Sir Thomas of Ercildoun. I hope to show how this master storyteller gives his readers a rollicking tale of warfare and witchcraft, which is also an extended spiritual meditation on identity, illusion, and reality.

### **Finding and Organizing Tolkien's Invented Languages. Eileen Moore**

The Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings* run the gamut from royal lineages and back stories of the Kings and Stewards of Gondor and Rohan and of Dúrin's folk (Appendix A), Hobbit family trees (Appendix C) and a general overview of the races and peoples of Middle-earth (Appendix F), to the chronology of the great events of the Second and Third Ages (Appendix B); from the Shire Calendar (Appendix D) and a detailed explication of how to pronounce the Elvish languages as well as their representation by the letters of the Tengwar and runes of the Cirth (Appendix E), to Tolkien's peculiar 'conceit' on the subject of translation, as though he had discovered all this material in the Red Book of Westmarch (Appendix F). While the examination of these Appendices has been the subject of endless scholarly research, it may be argued that the study of Tolkien's invented languages presents particularly unique challenges. An in-depth study of the glossaries, indices, and imbedded author's notes throughout the totality of Tolkien's posthumously published writings on Middle-earth (*The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, and all twelve volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*) in addition to the Gnomish and Qenya Lexicons (published in *Parma Eldalamberon* 11 and 12) reveals that the languages are fundamental to the existence of Middle-earth as Tolkien conceived it. Yet this origin story is so very difficult to grasp hold of and utilize, due to the scattered nature of the raw materials and the non-user-friendly manner in which they are presented. I would like to discuss how Tolkien's invented languages appear in all of these original sources and how I have labored to organize them over the past 19 years to create a reference resource for Tolkien scholars who don't have the time to wade through all of the paratexts themselves.

### **From Malacandra to Mars: Representations of the Red Planet in C. S. Lewis, Robert Sawyer, and Andy Weir. William Thompson**

In his introduction to *Visions of Mars: Essays on the Red Planet in Fiction and Science*, Howard V. Hendrix suggests that the long-standing fascination with the red planet emerges from an unspoken anxiety around the extinction of the species. According to Hendrix, the "fascination with the Neanderthals, like our fascination with greenhouse-blasted Venus or with Martians of the Dying Planet scenario, arises from forebodings that such scenarios present ourselves and our world as viewed—both seen and dreamed—through a funhouse mirror" (Hendrix 10).

The ongoing fascination with Mars has resulted in texts that treat the red planet in strikingly different ways. In C. S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet*, Elwin Ransom is forcibly reminded of his reading of Wellsian science fiction after overhearing his captors, Devine and Weston, speak of sorns. Ransom is overcome by a vision of the alien: "No insect-like, vermiculate or crustacean Abominable, no twitching feelers, rasping wings, slimy coils, curling tentacles, no monstrous union of superhuman intelligence and insatiable cruelty seemed to him anything but likely on an alien world" (Lewis 49). His subsequent experience of the utopian world of Malacandra is offset by Weston's imperial, colonialist vision, in which Weston foresees Malacandra as a stepping-stone for the future of humanity. Weston's colonialist vision is darkly realized in Robert J. Sawyer's *Red Planet Blues*, a book that follows in the tradition of texts anticipating the colonization of the red planet, such as Arthur C. Clarke's *The Sands of Mars* and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars*. *Red Planet Blues* is a futuristic, cautionary tale of the exploitation of the red planet, in which the alien is recast in terms of the insipid, commercial concerns of New

Klondike, a frontier town characterized by its prospectors, prostitutes, seedy bars, and corrupt police. Conversely, Andy Weir's *The Martian* recasts Mars in terms of scientific exploration. Weir grounds the story of Mark Watney's survival in scientific terms—extracting oxygen from hydrazine, growing potatoes, and planning his three-thousand-kilometre trip to Schiaparelli. At the same time, *The Martian* is a re-imagining of the Robinson Crusoe story, an eighteenth-century text rife with imperialist overtones. Each of these texts demonstrates a similar fascination with the alienness of the red planet and the question of human habitation. Weston's vision of human progress is spiritually bankrupt, which is in turn realized in Sawyer's New Klondike. *The Martian* is driven by scientific curiosity, but Weir returns again and again to the utter desolation of the Martian landscape. I want to argue that these texts continue to re-imagine and re-assess the future of humanity in relation to the red planet, and that more than ever, narratives of Mars serve as a mirror for the anxieties around human progress, from the spiritual to the scientific to the ecological.

### **“Her Enchanted Hair”: Rossetti, “Lady Lilith,” and the Victorian Fascination with Hair as Influences on Tolkien. Kathryn Colvin**

The Victorian poet and painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti appears upon first glance to be an unlikely inspiration for J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium: though both were medievalists, Tolkien's reputation for chaste prose contrasts sharply with Rossetti's famously “fleshly” work. However, a close reading of both—setting Rossetti's poetry, particularly “Lady Lilith” and its accompanying painting, alongside Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and posthumously published material from *The Silmarillion* and *The History of Middle-earth*—reveals a compelling and previously unexplored connection between the Victorian cultural mythology of magic hair (as epitomized by the “hair-mad” Rossetti) and Tolkien's detailed and often supernatural portrayals of women's tresses. According to my research, I believe my paper (published in *Mythlore* issue 137, Fall/Winter 2020) to be the first proposal of Rossetti as an influence on Tolkien, and also novel in its academic attention to Tolkien's portrayals of women's hair. One point at which Tolkien's writing lets down its own figurative hair is in its sumptuous descriptions of female characters' abundantly flowing locks, the desire they inspire in others, and even their weaponization: in his distinct and sensual attention to women's hair, I assert that Tolkien was inspired by the Victorians in general, while his depictions of the characters of Galadriel, Lúthien, and Melian are strikingly similar to the femme fatale Lady Lilith of Rossetti's poetry and painting.

### **The Keystone or the Cornerstone? A Rejoinder to Verlyn Flieger on the Alleged “Conflicting Sides” of Tolkien's Singular Self. Donald Williams**

In “The Arch and the Keystone,” *Mythlore* 38:1 (Fall/Winter 2019), 5-17, Tolkien scholar Verlyn Flieger argues that the conflicts and contradictions she sees in Tolkien's essays and fiction do not call for harmonization but rather should be embraced for what they are: “two opposing and conflicting sides of one person, whose contention makes him *who* he is as well as *what* he is, the keystone that creates the arch” of *The Lord of the Rings* out of the friction of the two sides (16). Unfortunately, the alleged contradictions, e.g. between the despair of the Beowulf essay and the hope for *eucatastrophe* in the essay “On Fairy-Stories,” reflected by light and darkness in *The Lord of the Rings*, are created by her failure to understand Tolkien's biblical worldview, where the impossibility of salvation *in this life* does not contradict, but is the logical setting for, the hope of a redemption not fully realized until the next. Thus an understanding of Tolkien's

biblical eschatology dissolves the alleged tension and lets us replace Flieger's keystone with the cornerstone of faith in Iluvatar and the true hope of Middle-earth.

### **“Long Anguish and Self-Murdering Thought”: Gollum and the Figure of Jealousy in *The Faerie Queene*. Anne Acker**

This paper argues that Gollum's story has parallels to the story of Malbecco in *The Faerie Queene*, and that Gollum should be read as an exploration of jealousy and its relationship to power, represented by the Ring that Gollum covets. In Spenser's allegory, Malbecco is cuckolded and robbed and retreats to a cave in the mountains where he is transformed into the inhuman shape of Jealousy. While *The Lord of the Rings* is not an allegory and should not be read as one, Smeagol's transformation into Gollum has striking similarities to this and other strange metamorphoses of characters who represent jealousy or suspicion. Recognizing this can help us identify traits in Gollum that allow him to be inwardly consumed by lust for the Ring. It is also possible to identify in hobbits character traits, such as generosity, fidelity, and friendship, that counter jealousy and allow them to resist the Ring's power.

### **My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me. John Rosegrant**

In this presentation I explore why Tolkien singled out for particular appreciation the Brothers Grimm fairy tale *The Juniper Tree*, which Tatar (*Annotated Grimm* 209) has called “the most shocking of all fairy tales.” In *On Fairy-Stories*, Tolkien described its effect on him as follows: “The beauty and horror of *The Juniper Tree*...with its exquisite and tragic beginning, the abominable cannibal stew, the gruesome bones, the gay and vengeful bird-spirit coming out of a mist that rose from the tree, has remained with me since childhood; and yet always the chief flavor of that tale lingering in the memory was not beauty or horror, but distance and a great abyss of time... Without the stew and the bones ... that vision would largely have been lost ...Such stories... open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe” (OFS 56). Tolkien is saying that his main response to *The Juniper Tree* was an experience of enchantment rather than horror, but that horror was a necessary element in producing this enchantment. By thinking about why Tolkien focused on the cannibalism (My Father He Ate Me) rather than the murder (My Mother She Killed Me) in this fairy tale, and investigating anthropological and psychological understandings of cannibalism, I will develop the idea that Tolkien's appreciation of this fairy tale stemmed from his experience of enchantment tangling at its edges with horror and the uncanny. In his response to *The Juniper Tree*, like in much of his legendarium, Tolkien situated himself at a complex, ambiguous balance point between communion and alienation, between joy and loss.

### **Mythopoeia in American Gods. Danica Stojanovic**

J. R. R. Tolkien coined the term *mythopoeia* as a philosophical concept referring to the process of artificially creating mythologies and belief systems of imaginary worlds. While building a fantasy world, one ought to consider the possibilities this world offers for religious explorations or examine how the existing pantheons weave their way into fiction and reality. To be more precise, what happens when gods lounge languidly among their supposed believers. This paper aims to examine mythopoetic tendencies, elements and powers in Neil Gaiman's novels *American Gods* and *Anansi Boys*, a fictional duology whose protagonists are in constant cohort

with various gods—whether they like it or not. *American Gods* follows the former convict Shadow, who unwittingly joins forces with the Old Norse high god Odin, who has primed himself to declare, and preferably, win the war against the new American pantheon born out of worship, dependency and addiction to the internet, media, conspiracy theories and corporate environments. Gods are envisioned as entities, which are brought to life through cultural practices, customs and repetitive claims, which makes them exponentially more powerful as their followership grows, but also susceptible to being disempowered and dissipation if they are forgotten. This vulnerability makes them aggressive and willing to bring on the combined force of many apocalypses in order to assert dominance and ensure their continued survival. On the other hand, *Anansi Boys*, while still embroiled in godly affairs, concerns itself with creating the myth of the self through a reversed hero's journey. Charlie, an average clerk, wishes only to lead a normal life away from his family. Yet, the news of his father's death sets a series of inexplicable events into motion, including the return of Charlie's not entirely real, but certainly evil twin, as well as a number of gods from the Caribbean pantheon. In order to save his reality, Charlie must accept his heritage, becoming a mythopoeist of the self, who has the power to narrate his own existence outside of meddling gods' wills. This paper will provide a theoretical overview of how myths are born and reproduced throughout social and cultural DNA before endeavouring to shed light on mythopoeia in *American Gods* and *Anansi Boys*, with a view to hinting at the narrative power of myths and their ascent into reality.

### **Other Than Him: Superman as the Alien That Made Good. Roy Schwartz**

When discussing depictions of the alien in American popular culture—as extraterrestrial, as strange foreigner, and as both, an otherworldly Other—the most famous example is rarely considered; SUPERMAN. Introduced in 1938, this strange visitor from another planet possesses powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men but walks among us disguised as a mild-mannered human. He's the fantastic hiding in plain sight as the most mundane, an Other beloved as familiar, a singular being of another race who's come to symbolize the best in humanity. And not by accident. Superman was created by two Cleveland teens, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. They were Jews in the Midwest during the rise of Nazism abroad and at home, bashful geeks bullied by other boys and rejected by girls, one the son of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the other an immigrant himself. They were Others in every sense, and into their alien hero they poured all their wishes, to belong and be accepted but also to be exceptional and revered. To be special but also to blend in. To be both Super and man. They gave their assimilation/assertion fantasy a nebulous secret identity based on themselves and empowered him with their Jewish heritage; the origin story of Moses as a baby sent adrift to safety, the physical and moral strength of Samson the mighty lawman, and the mission of the Golem as an inhuman protector of his creators. They made him a refugee fleeing catastrophe on the eve of World War II and sent him to tear Nazi tanks apart nearly two years before the US joined the war. In following decades, Superman's mostly Jewish writers, artists, and editors continued to borrow Judaic motifs for their stories, further exploring the character's unique standing as an alien who's accepted as human, an Other who's come to embody our idealized selves. In the postwar era he was blamed for causing juvenile delinquency, in the sixties and seventies he underwent frequent Kafkaesque metamorphoses, in the eighties he unsuccessfully attempted to renounce his alien heritage and with it his Otherness, and more recently he's been featured in

various alternate narratives in which he turns evil, like *The Dark Side* comic books, *Injustice* video games and *Zack Snyder's Justice League* film.

### **The Personhood of Nature in J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium. Sofia Parrila**

This paper argues that J. R. R. Tolkien's portrayal of plants, animals, and geographical features as morally complex persons is central to the ecocentric model of environmental stewardship developed within Tolkien's Legendarium. Tolkien's Middle-earth writings endow non-human beings such as animals, plants, and even rivers with personhood by emphasizing their individuality, their capacity for interpersonal relationships, and their agency to make moral choices. I build on work done by critics such as Susan Jeffers (*Arda Inhabited*), and Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans (*Ents, Elves, and Eriador*) to find a practicable and inspirational environmental ethic in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, and *Unfinished Tales*. The most common philosophical framework for analyzing Tolkien's environmentalism is a Catholic model of stewardship. But a traditional stewardship ethic, in which environmental responsibility belongs to human beings acting as God's stewards, risks falling into anthropocentrism or a sense of entitlement over a nature that is understood as resources existing for human extraction. By analyzing three of Tolkien's works—*The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, and the unfinished story "Aldarion and Erendis"—this paper argues that Tolkien was aware of the limits of human environmental stewardship. Tolkien's Catholic Christian background and his deep love for natural features interact to create an ecological ethic indebted to the stewardship model, but in which humanity does not have a monopoly on stewardship, and in which the value of non-human Creation comes directly from its personhood.

### **Philology of the Lived Imagination: Vico, Collingwood, and Tolkien. Reno Lauro**

This paper endeavors to uniquely address a question proposed by Tom Shippey in a guest editorial for *Mallorn* issue 45. "[R.G.] Collingwood and Tolkien were both Fellows of Pembroke College for nearly a decade till 1934, when Collingwood took up a Chair at C.S. Lewis's college, Magdalen. Did the three of them ever talk about, agree about, disagree about the subject of folktales, on which Collingwood was working and publicly lecturing in the 1930s?" (Shippey 4). In order to answer Shippey's question, I suggest that 'folktales' may not be the only or best way into this investigation. While we know that 'folktales' were certainly discussed between the two scholars, a deeper and more fundamental connection may lie in a shared view of language, history, and imagination that has its common source in the philological philosophy of Giambattista Vico (1668–1744). Most significant to understanding Vico's complex philology is his "master key" –the assertion that there was a time when humans lived and expressed a poetic mode of being in the world, or as Vico calls it, a "wholly corporeal imagination". I will lay out the principles of Vico's corporeal—or lived—imagination and demonstrate the unusually close proximity to Tolkien and Collingwood's unique projects. This is particularly significant in terms of Tolkien studies as Collingwood's influence on Tolkien, though overshadowed by the influence of Barfield's *Poetic Diction*, may be as or even more significant during Tolkien's highly productive period between 1929 and 1939. In conclusion, the paper will demonstrate the manifold points of contact among the three (Vico, Collingwood, and Tolkien) that should conceivably make future readings of Tolkien impossible without the inclusion of Vico and Collingwood.

### **The Philosophy and Theology of Fairy-Stories: Fantasy, Escape, Recovery, and Consolation. Giovanni Costabile**

In his seminal 1939 Andrew Lang lecture “On Fairy-Stories,” Tolkien proposed what we might term his most extensive pronouncement on his own fiction and underlying poetics, as well as an analysis of Fairy-Stories constituting a referential and authoritative statement on the matter. The importance of the subsequently published text, chiefly cited from Christopher Tolkien's posthumous edited version in *The Monsters and the Critics*, or, more recently, in Douglas A. Anderson's and Verlyn Flieger's critical edition, simply cannot be overstated.

In the light of such awareness, I would like to examine Tolkien's antecedents as far as his chief arguments are concerned, beginning with fellow Pembroke College Professor Robert George Collingwood's philosophy as published in 2004 from the manuscript of his 1936 Folk Lore Society lectures, by the title *The Philosophy of Enchantment*, which was paraphrased in titling the present account. In fact, Collingwood therein touched on many of the subjects treated in Tolkien's lecture, also agreeing with him in many respects, therefore an evaluation should be given as to how the two thinkers' minds stand in comparison to each other, especially regarding, for example, their common references concerning the study of the origins of Fairy-Stories, their shared critique of the exclusive association of aforesaid tales with children, as well as their concepts of Magic and Enchantment, and their negative views on modern technology. Subsequently, I would like to focus on the key terms of Tolkien's theory of Subcreation by pointing out how all four—Fantasy, Escape, Recovery, and Consolation—powerfully resound with theological significance, and even more strikingly so in the case of the latter couple. Fantasy in its technical theological meaning was compared to God's light bestowing understanding to human minds in Reginald Pecock's 15th century theological treatise titled *The Book of Faith*. Pecock's *The Rule of Christian Religion* is also an example of the conception of Christian Salvation as Escape from damnation. In another work, titled *Patience*, of the anonymous 14th century of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which Tolkien edited, line 394 reads: “Alle cryed for care to þe Kyng of heven, Recoverer of þe Creator þay cryed uch one”. Finally, the Consolator par excellence, according to the New Testament, is the Holy Spirit, whom is sent by God to the Apostles after Christ's ascension to Heaven. It is interesting to point this out, also in the light of another known fact hardly pointed out in this respect, although probably relevant: despite the awareness that Tolkien may have been influenced by 6th century thinker Boethius, especially in his Old English translation, seemingly it has always escaped the critic's eye the fact that his referential work so translated is titled: *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

### **Realizing History: Tolkien and the Desire Called Marx. Robert Tally**

In this talk, I argue that the “realization” of history is an important aim of Tolkien's art. Tolkien's desire to create a new mythology for England, which is well known, is in part a response to the shifting ground upon which he stood, in reaction to what Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* had called the “constant revolutionizing” and the “cosmopolitan character” of bourgeois society, industrial civilization, imperialism, and the rise of monopoly capital. Tolkien's yearning for a mythic past, despite its clear nationalism and chauvinism at first, reflected a deep desire to connect his modern world with an august, barely accessible past through forms of historical narrative. This is not an escape into a mythical, premodern realm as is frequently imagined. Rather, it is an attempt to take the broken and disconnected fragments

of culture and put them together into a meaningful history, evoking what Tolkien would call “the seamless web of story.” Fredric Jameson, following Jean-François Lyotard, refers to this as “the desire called Marx,” in effect an urgent need to connect up the various shreds in the fabric of history to form a continuous narrative. Tolkien’s experiments with different genres and styles betray the difficulties he had in organizing this overall narrative project, but his impulse in producing a grand narrative involving myth, fairy story, romance, history, and the modern novelistic form is to give shape to a world that had, in his view, lost its *sense*. Through his efforts, Tolkien’s great *legendarium* provides a history for a world that had forgotten how to think historically.

### **A Saga Re-Written: The Character of Odin and J.R.R. Tolkien's Addition of *Eucatastrophe* in "The New Lay of the Volsungs." Matthew Gidney**

In this paper, adapted from the second chapter of my Master’s thesis, I will argue that Tolkien was not interested in mimicking Norse mythology nor endorsing the Nordic worldview, but rather re-writing Norse mythology in accord with its true light. This concept of “true light” is drawn from a letter by Tolkien to his son Michael in which he laments the corruption of “that noble northern spirit, a supreme contribution to Europe, which I have ever loved, and tried to present in its true light” (Carpenter, *Letters* 56). Tolkien had an Augustinian conception of evil, believing that good is primary, evil secondary. Therefore, a good thing like Northern courage, in Tolkien’s view, could be corrupted, yet beneath that corruption, it still retained its true light. The true light of Northern Courage was, in Tolkien’s view, something worthwhile which he desired to see redeemed.

This project is clearly demonstrated in *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun*, where Tolkien tampers with the saga at such a foundational level that it is hardly appropriate to still refer to the poem as Norse. *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun* follows the familiar character of Sigurd along his well-documented quest, led on his way by a god named Odin, but Tolkien’s poem takes liberties with the story that shake it—thematically—to its core. The Nordic worldview, characterized by its distinct theory of courage, was a worldview entirely built around the idea that the earth and everyone in it was doomed to ultimate defeat along with their gods, and their response, as modeled by Odin and the rest of the Aesir, was to defiantly fight on to the bitter end. The Nordic worldview was one that acknowledged that the world was a cold, brutal place full of cruel and violent people, all predestined for suffering and destruction without even the hope that their gods might save them: a bleak and demoralizing prospect to say the least. Yet, the ancient Norse were known as hardy, relentlessly courageous people, despite their gloomy worldview. Though they acknowledged the bleakness of their position, they were determined to go down to the grave laughing defiantly, with heads held high until the very last. This, in a nutshell, is Northern courage. Yet, in Tolkien’s “New Lay of the Volsungs,” he inserts a messianic promise of redemption and suggests that death in fact will be overcome, even if it is not entirely clear how. On the surface, this insertion may seem a small detail considering how few lines are actually dedicated to it, but it is a detail which undermines the entire tapestry of Norse mythology, a move which cannot be mistaken as a mere mistake or misunderstanding coming from a student of Norse language and literature such as Tolkien. Tolkien’s subversive addition was a calculated move and part of his project to rewrite Norse mythology in order to present Northern courage in its true light.



### **The Speculative Worldbuilding of ADÁL's *Blueprints for a Nation*. Matthew David Goodwin**

ADÁL's *Blueprints for a Nation* is an art installation that displays artifacts from the conceptual nation of El Spirit Republic de Puerto Rico. This imaginal nation expresses the unique social and linguistic experience of Puerto Ricans living off the island, and its principle tool is speculative worldbuilding. This essay examines two of the speculative roots of *Blueprints for a Nation*. First, the essay explores "El Mapagraph," the fictional map of the nation that is in the shape of a domino and that alludes to the common practice of mapping utopias and fantasy worlds. The work also makes clear by its location as "west of Eden" that it is not only working against perfect utopianism, but also the perception of the U.S. that Puerto Rico is primarily significant as a natural resource, a paradise vacation spot, for citizens on the mainland. Second, this essay examines the photos series *Out of Focus Nuyoricans* that is part of the installation and that has its roots in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. This series demonstrates how this conceptual nation becomes more than a thought experiment. ADÁL specifically developed the photo series along with his Puerto Rican passport project which was implemented through live-performances. The passport has also at times functioned as an actual passport throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. The essay ends with an articulation of the ways that speculative worldbuilding can be combined with political and aesthetic purposes to create a unique real-fantasy world.

### **Spray-painting the Sistine Chapel: Aesthetic Problems in *Leaf By Niggle*. John Holmes**

No work of the allegoriphobic Tolkien is more manifestly allegorical than his short story "Leaf By Niggle." Because of the story's unmistakably allegorical nature, when the reader encounters the four-word sentence that opens the second paragraph—"Niggle was a painter"—the initial response might justly be to read "painter" in a more generic sense to mean "artist in general." Indeed, the best criticism of this story tends to read Niggle's problem as an analogue of Tolkien's problem as sub-creator of Middle-earth, primarily in writing. But because Tolkien's rendering of Middle-earth sometimes took form in pencil sketches and watercolors as well, Niggle's painterly dilemmas sometimes illuminate particular compositional challenges, dilemmas of form and texture that Tolkien had himself encountered and solved in his drawings and paintings. This paper will enumerate the problems specifically identified in the story. These problems include:

1. **Detail vs. Design.** Niggle is described as "the sort of painter who can paint leaves better than trees." Yet he *wants* to paint whole forests, yet with each leaf in that forest as perfect and as individual as the single leaves he paints so well. A look at some of Tolkien's most successful landscapes will explore how he resolves the tension between the part and the whole, a quality medieval theorists of beauty (particularly Aquinas and Bonaventure) call *integritas*.
2. **"Spray" Painting.** Niggle's most nagging problem is the "treatment" of a "spray" he imagines in his painting. In medieval manuscript illumination—the one artform on which Tolkien could reasonably claim authority—the primary meaning of "spray" is "images of foliage emanating from large capital letters." By 1300 "the spray" became the cliché perch for "brides" in lyric poetry (Barbour, *Bruce* 16.64; Chaucer *Topas* 59). Compositionally, Niggle imagines the spray as a foregrounding to create depth with the

nearest design element, a distant mountain to the left. Illustrations of Tolkien using this technique will be shown.

3. **Legibility.** The permeability of the boundaries between painting and storytelling is betrayed when Atkins—Niggle’s schoolmaster—said of the only scrap surviving from Niggle’s painting was “damaged but still legible.” In what sense is a painting “legible”? Is that the right word? Well, it is revealing.
4. **Visual Imagination and Eternity.** The essentially incompatibility of overall design with the ambition of spending Niggle-like attention to every leaf in a forest of millions (no exaggeration: a mature oak has 200,000 leaves, so it only takes five trees to make a million leaves). Impossible for a single artist even in the CGI era (sit through the credits of a CGI film if you think computers totally eliminate Niggle’s problem), in a single lifetime. But given eternity—well, that explains the ending of Tolkien’s story.

As much as possible, I hope to illustrate each of these four issues with art by Tolkien in my presentation.

### **Sterner Stuff: Sansa Stark and the System of Gothic Fantasy. Joseph Young**

George R.R. Martin’s characterisation of Sansa Stark is among the contentious aspects of the reception of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The violence, indignities and threats heaped upon Sansa have been described as gratuitous, cited as evidence of an unusually cold-hearted writer, and marshalled as evidence by those querying the story’s feminist credibility. Sansa’s passive acceptance of such mistreatment could mark her as a character denuded of agency, which would seem either tasteless or a serious misstep by an author of stated feminist sympathies.

In an alternate reading, however, Sansa’s travails and her capacity to absorb them mark her as a heroine recognisable in William Patrick Day’s system of Gothic fantasy. Despite (indeed, because of) her determination to become a chivalric damsel, Sansa is carefully established as possessing recognisably modern characteristics. She is then thrust unknowingly into a medievalist world that carries numerous resonances of the Gothic tradition, particularly in its capacity as a vehicle of systemic barbarism, violence and abuse. In accordance with Day’s system, Sansa’s capacity to absorb passively this abuse serves a dual purpose. It enters the barbarism of Westeros into the narrative record, damning her persecutors as atavistic monsters, while her ability to cope with such atavism demonstrates the capacity of modern sensibilities to overcome the perceived iniquities of the past. This point becomes particularly clear when Sansa is compared to her brother Robb, who in his relentless but fruitless attempt to overcome the world around him clearly instantiates Day’s construction of the archetypal Gothic male hero. The Gothic world is set up to defeat modern action, but cannot outlast determined passivity; in the context of Day’s model, Sansa is a far more effective opponent of Westeros’s carefully stage-managed iniquities than any of her relations.

### **Writing Against the Grain: T. Kingfisher's Feminist Mythopoeic Fantasy. Robin Anne Reid**

In "On Fairy-stories," J. R. R. Tolkien defined and defended the genre of fantasy by quoting and then explicating his poem, "Mythopoeia." Tolkien's theory of mythopoeic literature can be

applied to his own fiction, but, increasingly, scholars are applying it to other texts including superhero films and contemporary fantasy novels (Holdier, Kane). In this presentation, I argue that three of Kingfisher's series, the Clocktaur War, Saint of Steel, and Paladin, set in and around Anuket City, fit some of the characteristics of mythopoeic fantasy identified by Tolkien while swerving notably from others. Thus, Kingfisher's fantasy is similar to work by the writers Faye Ringel interviewed for her essay, "Women Fantasists: In the Shadow of the Ring." Performing her own feminist swerve on Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence*, Ringel concludes that while the "women fantasists accept some of Tolkien's premises, they differ strongly with him on the subject of women's roles" (165). Tolkien's necessary characteristics for a mythopoeic text involve textual elements and reader response. A mythopoeic fantasy is set in a secondary world that is internally consistent; the "magic" must "be taken seriously," and the best of the genre involves "the Consolation of the Happy Ending" (32-33;75). Tolkien makes it clear that this genre is for readers who appreciate it, no matter what their age, challenging the assumption at the time that fairy stories were only suitable for children. Recovery, escape, and consolation are how mythopoeic fantasies impact readers. Tolkien makes it clear that fairies (elves) are not required while his epilogue places the genre firmly in his Christian belief system. Some of the elements in Kingfisher's series that are mythopoeic are: the coherence of the secondary world, across three series with different characters; a version of Faërie, called the Vagrant Lands; the presence of magic, called "wonderworking." Elements which swerve decisively from Tolkien's criteria are the lack of kings and heroes; the presence of religious institutions and their orders; polytheism; the widespread distribution of wonderworking along with the lack of wizards; the focus on female protagonists. powerful male characters. Since Kingfisher is writing fantasy romance rather than epic fantasy, the protagonists include a forger, a perfumer, and a widowed housekeeper who inherits a magic sword. These swerves from Tolkien's definition strengthen my experience of recovery, escape, and consolation as a reader, responses that grew stronger during my re-reading of her work during the first year of the pandemic.

## Panel and Roundtable Titles and Abstracts

*All Mythcon programming will be hosted in "Meeting" mode—so you will have the option to allow other Mythcon attendees to see and hear you, even as an observer. You may be asked to mute yourself and turn off your camera during the presentation. Be aware of presentations that are being filmed and mute/hide yourself accordingly. Please be courteous to presenters and adhere to the Community Guidelines. Instructions and best practices for moderators and presenters [can be found here](#).*

*Those sessions denoted "Panel" will be your usual model of a panel of speakers chatting for about 30 minutes with about 15 minutes of audience questions. Those denoted "Roundtable" are built more for audience conversation, and though they may still feature panelists, the bulk of the time will be given to questions and conversation rather than to presentation. Therefore, Roundtables may be more your speed if you want to converse, while you may favor Panels if you want to observe.*

### **Back to Camelot: 21st-century Reinterpretations of the Arthurian Mythos (Roundtable)**

With David Lowery's film, *The Green Knight*, headed for a pandemic-delayed opening this summer, the Arthurian mythos re-enters popular culture yet again. How do this and other recent retellings of the Matter of Britain connect our world with its roots? We'll consider not only the new film, but also such novels as *Kingfisher*, by Patricia McKillip; *Once & Future*, by A.R. Capetta; and *Cursed*, by Frank Miller and Tom Wheeler, alongside the TV series based on it. What version of Camelot and its attendant tales and heroes do today's Arthurian works present? How are they in dialogue with earlier renditions? What keeps us returning again and again to this most evergreen of myths?

Moderator: Jennifer Spirko

Panelist: Scott Johnson

Panelist: Bradley McIlwain

### **Cities and Strongholds of Middle-earth, Pt 1 (panel)**

The Cities and Strongholds of Middle-earth panels bring together seven of the chapters to appear in the upcoming volume of the same name from MythPress. The volume explores the habitations of Middle-earth across the ages, as well as the cultures responsible for those built structures. Presenters will briefly explain their chapters in order to leave plenty of room for discussion.

Moderator: Cami Agan

Panelist: Nicholas Birns

Panelist: Birgitte Breemerkamp

Panelist: Marie Bretagnolle

Panelists: Robin A. Reid

### **Cities and Strongholds of Middle-earth, Pt 2 (panel)**

The Cities and Strongholds of Middle-earth panels bring together eight of the chapters to appear in the upcoming volume of the same name from MythPress. The volume explores the habitations of Middle-earth across the ages, as well as the cultures responsible for those built structures. Presenters will briefly explain their chapters in order to leave plenty of room for discussion.

Moderator: Cami Agan

Panelist: Maria Alberto

Panelist: Rebecca Davis

Panelists: Kenton Sena and Kaelyn Harris

### **Eärendil's Errand and "Errantry" (panel)**

Tolkien's love of word play legitimizes considering the linguistic closeness of errantry, Eärendil, and errand. This leads to the points this panel will consider: Tolkien has more than once taken themes and motifs first used in a lighter story and woven them, in more serious form, into his broader legendarium; for example, *The Hobbit's* Bard presages Aragorn, and its lower-case ring the centrally important Ring of the longer work. Eärendil is supposed to have been the subject of one of the great tales, but we never get it in its full form, or more comparably, in multiple forms over many years in various degrees of fullness, like the story of Beren and Lúthien. Do the points

of similarity between “Errantry” and “Eärendil was a mariner” deserve a closer look? In addition to the reused metrical format, parallel incidents, repeated vocabulary and even lines, there is “bewilderment” and wakening from it to remember an errand—an errand never defined for us, as Eärendil’s tale is never fully defined.

Moderator: Janet Brennan Croft

Panelist: David Emerson

Panelist: David Bratman

Panelist: Verlyn Flieger

### **Fairy Tale Retellings for the Modern World (panel)**

Fairy tales have timeless appeal for both audiences and creators, especially when they’re updated in a way that speaks to modern sensibilities or are mashed up with another genre to create something familiar yet fresh. Several authors will discuss what’s behind the impulse to retell fairy tales, as well as the challenges of transferring a traditional tale into a non-traditional setting, such as a steampunk world or a different historical setting.

Moderator: Sarena Ulibarri

Panelist: Reese Hogan

Panelist: Charlotte Honigman

Panelist: Wendy Nickel

Panelist: Lissa Sloan

### **The Fantastic Short Story (Roundtable)**

This roundtable will include a short presentation on the fantasy short story; its roots in myth, fables and fairy tales; its growth from the twentieth century to the present day; and a personal top ten list. Attendees will share their personal favorite stories and virtual and print sources to find more stories, as well as answer or discuss questions related to the genre. Some questions will include: Favorite mythopoeic short story and why? Who are some great editors or collections? Where did you discover your favorite story? Who are important authors, both past and present? Where do you see the genre going?

Moderator: Vicki Ronn

### **Habla Amigo y Entra: Tolkien and the Language of Wonder (panel)**

This panel will deal with the way in which Tolkien’s works act as a threshold to approach the works of other Fantasy authors and literary traditions. It will also consider the reception of these works and how they are perceived differently when read in different languages, as well as the impact of localization.

Moderator: Martha Celis-Mendoza

Panelist: Guillermo Don Juan

Panelist: Aline Esperanza Maza Vázquez

Panelist: Jorge de la Vega

### **How Mythopoeic Stories Carve Space For Change (Roundtable)**

Mythopoeic writings have the capacity to carve out space for new visions, radical thought, and social change. Join Rivera Sun for a roundtable discussion on how this has impacted us as readers (or writers) in our own lives. We'll also explore how far these writings can push the envelope before society starts pushing back. Where are the boundaries that can't be crossed, and how can mythopoeic stories help shift those boundaries on behalf of social change? What role does perceived market demand or pushback play in how publishers either constrain or support stories that help us imagine a new world into existence?

Moderator: Rivera Sun

### **Lil Nas X's "Montero": A Visual Mythology (Roundtable)**

Come join us for a discussion about the music video that broke the internet in 2021. We will host a watch along followed by a deep discussion about the philosophical and mythological visual elements at play in this video, and how they relate to the queer experience in America.

Moderator: Alicia Fox-Lenz

Panelist: Jessica Dickinson Goodman

### **The Mythopoeic Fantasy and Scholarly Awards Discussions (Roundtable)**

A roundtable discussion of the Mythopoeic Society Fantasy Awards, and Mythopoeic Scholarly Awards process. This Roundtable is also for discussing any recent books that may or may not have been considered on the preliminary Awards list, and which set the stage for this year's finalists (as yet unknown!). Everyone is welcome to join in with their responses to books mentioned or other outstanding, Awards-worthy books.

Moderator: David Lendander

### **Mythopoeic D&D (Roundtable)**

Ever since Tolkien's "Hobbit Burglar" became the off-brand "Halfling Rogue" of roleplaying game *Dungeons & Dragons*, *D&D* has been indebted to Tolkien and other fantasy literature, and much fantasy media has indeed since modeled itself on *D&D*. For this Roundtable, our panelists (themselves a *D&D* party of 9 years) wish to invite audience discussion of the mythopoeia of *D&D*: its influences, its inventions, and its impact. Is *D&D* the "Mythology for England" Tolkien talked about creating, specifically the part about leaving "scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama" (and dice)? Or can *D&D* grow beyond its pseudo-medieval, Eurocentric, and Tolkienian fantasy roots?

Moderator: Megan Abrahamson

Panelist: Bethany Abrahamson

Panelist: Nyssa Gilkey

Panelist: Caitlin Rottler

### **Q&A with Mythopoeic Award Winners (Roundtable)**

Steward of Mythopoeic Awards Dennis Wise will lead conversation and Q&A with some of last year's Mythopoeic Society Award winners: James Gifford, Theodora Goss, and Yoon Ha Lee.

### **Q&A with Unofficial Mythos Historian Lee Speth (Roundtable)**

An attendee of Mythcon 3 and a Steward since 1979, Lee Speth has been called the Mythopoeic Society's unofficial historian. Usually "trapped" behind the Mythopoeic Society Merchandise Table at Mythcons, this year he is free to contribute to programming and regale us with stories from bygone times. Come ask Lee about the history of the Mythopoeic Society, Golfimbul, and general shenanigans.

Moderator: Alicia Fox-Lenz

### **Race, Racisms, and Tolkien (Roundtable)**

The small but growing body of work on race in Tolkien studies includes medievalist, modernist, and postmodernist approaches analyzing Tolkien's or Jackson's texts and, increasingly games and transformative works. The release of the films accelerated debate over the question of racism, especially in relation to the origin and nature of the Orcs. The context for this scholarship includes the growing attention to medieval constructions of race in response to the idealization of an imagined White Middle Ages among neo-fascist and white supremacist groups. Dimitra Fimi has shown in *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History* that Tolkien's construction of the races of Middle-earth was not limited to his medievalist knowledge but responded to the contemporary scientific and popular knowledge about race and racism of his lifetime. Helen Young, in *Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness*, traces how Tolkien and Robert E. Howard's fiction established racialized tropes in genre fantasy, tracing not only literature but fan cultures and the effects of digital communications. This roundtable examines the current state of the scholarship, the gaps that exist, and the exclusions that have hampered consideration of constructions of race in Tolkien's work (including reliance upon authorial intentionality, disciplinary and methodological differences, and the lack of attention paid to Whiteness as a raced category). Robin Anne Reid will discuss her plans for an anthology on race, racisms, and Tolkien and her recent work with "The Free Orcs AU" (a transformative work). Craig Franson will discuss the history of Tolkien's reception and appropriation by white supremacists. Will Sherwood will discuss the impact of the Tolkien Society's recent seminar on the theme of Tolkien and Diversity. Megan Abrahamson will showcase some *Silmarillion* fanart and explore the Tumblr subcultures that, by diversifying portrayals of characters who have not (yet) been codified in film, plumb new depths of fantasy worldbuilding where the socially constructed concept of race is truly different from our own. Helen Young will discuss why understanding whiteness as a raced category is important for reading Tolkien and why critical readings are inherently hopeful, and open up who can love Tolkien.

Moderators: Megan Abrahamson, Robin Anne Reid

Panelist: Craig Franson

Panelist: Will Sherwood

Panelist: Helen Young

### **Spoilers & Sequels: Bifurcated Fandoms in the Age of Adaptation (Panel)**

Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* movies launched a new era of adaptations of fantasy. The resulting adaptations—of the works of J.K. Rowling, Philip Pullman, George R.R. Martin, the Marvel superhero tradition and much else besides—now have fan bases often wholly separate

from those of their literary source texts. Rather than dwelling on what any given example gets ‘wrong’ or ‘right,’ this panel discussion will consider this bifurcation of the audience of a popular literary genre. If, as Tom Shippey suggests, fantasy deserves to be taken seriously because of its popularity, what are the ramifications of atomising the popular followings of these texts into “book-readers” and “show-watchers”? How has this division altered the experience of being a fan, scholar or teacher of such texts? And do the adaptations offer the same Tolkienian Recovery that make the source texts as resonant as they are?"

Moderator: Joe Young

Panelist: Paul Tankard

Panelist: Lana Whited

### **Transmedia Mythopoeia: Towards an Interactive Mythology? (Roundtable)**

You enter a bookstore and go to the fantasy section. You pick a book. You open it. As you flip through the pages, you suppose, unsurprisingly, that this book contains a fair amount of lore and a map. Why would it not? This is standard practice in fantasy: How else would you immerse your reader in a novel without building a “believable” world? Nonetheless, mythopoeia is not limited to the book form. Films, television series, and videogames also form part of mythopoeia. Storytelling need not be limited to one medium either, or even one at a time, especially when the boundaries are blurred. Transmedia storytelling, for example, is a narrative technique whereby a story is told through different media platforms, usually digital, but sometimes include reality itself. Commentators have noted that the Adventure and Romance Agency, an odd business specializing in creating adventures for their clients in G.K. Chesterton’s Club of Queer Trades, foreshadowed the creation of the Alternate Reality Game (ARG) based upon this concept. Today, this fiction has become a reality. With the advent of the internet, extended reality technology, and artificial intelligence—which have shown storytelling potential—reality has opened itself to be gamified, as well as narrativized, in completely new ways. What will this mean for the mythopoeic works of the future?

Moderator: Brian Thomson

### **(Un)Fair(ly) Unknown: New and Neglected Arthurian Television Programming (panel)**

The Arthurian tradition abounds with Fair Unknowns, characters whose identity and true worth is revealed only slowly over the course of an adventure. In this session, we’d like to adopt the motif to look at new and neglected television series that make interesting use of the legend and deserve more recognition by scholars.

Moderator: Carl B. Sell

Panelist: Michael Torregrossa

Panelist: Richard Fahey

Panelist: Rachael K. Warmington

## Alternative Programming Descriptions

### ***Assassin’s Creed: Valhalla* “Beowulf” Playthrough**



Watch and chat as Nyssa Gilkey takes us through one arc of the *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* video game. *Assassin's Creed* is a twelve-game franchise that travels through multiple time periods and countries to tell a larger story about two separate ideologies battling over the fate of the world. While some games are set in Renaissance Italy with main character Ezio, and others are in Ptolemaic Egypt as Bayek, for this game players experience the Viking invasion of England with Eivor. Nyssa will play as Eivor, who meets an abbess named Wulfhilda who needs help with a creature called Grendel. Conversation and Q&A to follow. This game is rated M for violence and gore; view at your own risk.

### **Bardic Circle**

A space to share music, poetry, and short stories in the mythopoeic tradition. Participate or just watch and listen. Hosted by David Lenander.

### **Cards Against Arda**

Play a Tolkien-themed version of the open-access party game Cards Against Humanity compiled by Megan Abrahamson and Alicia Fox-Lenz. Join us for one round or a few, or just observe. Hosted by Alicia Fox-Lenz. Some material may not be safe for work; view at your own risk.

### **Film Night: *Khraniteli (Keepers of the Ring)***

Enjoy an evening of watching (perhaps riffing) the recently rediscovered 1991 Soviet teleplay in Russian (with subtitles), in all its psychedelic glory. BYOB and popcorn (and jokes)! Hosted by Tim Lenz.

### **Lord of the Rings Online (LOTRO) “Chicken Run”**

Any LOTRO players who have characters on the Landroval server are invited to join in on a “Flying the Coop” quest. Everyone else is welcome to observe the game as a range of characters run through an immersive Middle-earth experience. Hosted by Alicia Fox-Lenz and Tim Lenz.

### **Tolkien and SFF Trivia**

Lynne Darga hosts a trivia game with two trivia sets: one a deep-dive into Tolkien esoterica and the other more general science fiction/fantasy—both designed to be challenging! All are invited to participate, or just watch. The First Place winner of each session of Trivia gets one free PDF of a Mythpress book! Choose from:

*Baptism of Fire: The Birth of the Modern British Fantastic in World War I*

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft (2015)

*Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J. R. R. Tolkien*

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft and Leslie Donovan (2015)

*Intersection of Fantasy & Native America: From H. P. Lovecraft to Leslie Marmon Silko*

Edited by Amy H. Sturgis and David D. Oberhelman (2009)

*Past Watchful Dragons: Fantasy and Faith in the World of C. S. Lewis*

Edited by Amy H. Sturgis; Preface by Darrell Gwaltney (2007)

*Tolkien on Film: Essays on Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings*

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft (2005)

*Proceedings of the J.R.R. Tolkien Centenary Conference 1992 (Mythlore 80/Mallorn 33)*

Edited by Patricia Reynolds and Glen H. GoodKnight (1995)

## Presenter Biographies

**Bethany Abrahamson** made her debut at Mythcon 50 discussing Tolkien and nature. She earned a Master of Science in biology from UNM and served on the Hobbit Society committee throughout college. She has played *D&D* since she was ten, and been a dungeon master for about 15 years, running games in classic *D&D*, *Iron Kingdoms*, *Star Wars* and sundry homebrew games.

**Megan B. Abrahamson** holds a PhD from the University of Missouri and a MA from the University of New Mexico in English with concentrations in Medieval Literature. She has published “JRR Tolkien, Fanfiction, and the ‘Freedom of the Reader’” in *Mythlore* and continues to be interested in popular culture intersections with medieval literature and culture. She is an English instructor at Central New Mexico Community College and is Co-Chair of Mythcon 51 and Mythcon 52 with Leslie A. Donovan.

**Anne Acker** is a native and lifelong resident of Northeast Tennessee and a graduate of Milligan University and East Tennessee State University. Before completing her graduate degrees, she briefly taught middle and high school English and worked as an elementary school librarian for five years. She has a Ph.D. in English from the University of Tennessee with specializations in Early Modern Literature and Rhetoric. Her research interest is the literature of the English Reformation. Anne currently teaches at Tusculum University in Greeneville, TN, where she is the department specialist in British Literature.

**Cami Agan** is Professor of English at Oklahoma Christian University and teaches British Literature, including a course on Tolkien. She has published in *Mythlore* and *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, has contributed chapters to *Perilous and Fair*, *Approaches to Teaching Tolkien*, the forthcoming volume dedicated to David Oberhelman, and is the editor of *Cities and Strongholds of Middle-earth*, in progress. Her primary interest is in the geography and elegiac memory of First Age Beleriand.

**Maria Alberto** is a PhD candidate in literature and cultural studies at the University of Utah. Her research interests include adaptation, popular culture, digital media, and fan studies, and her recent work includes essays in *Mythlore*, *M/C Journal*, and *Transformative Works and Cultures*, as well as forthcoming book chapters on Tolkien's mythic cities and queer readings of his legendarium. At this very moment, she is probably working on her dissertation or playing *D&D*. Either way, coffee is involved.

**Nicholas Birns** teaches at NYU. He spoke at the Tolkien and Diversity symposium in 2021 and the Morgan Library symposium on Tolkien in 2019 and has published articles and reviews on Tolkien in *Mythlore*, *Tolkien Studies* and *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. He has published many articles and books in other areas of literary studies.

**David Bratman** is co-editor of *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review*, for which he has written and now edits “The Year’s Work in Tolkien Studies.” He is also former editor of *Mythprint*, bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society. His publications include articles and reviews concerning J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Ursula K. Le Guin, Mervyn Peake, Neil Gaiman, and other authors. He has edited *The Masques of Amen House by Charles Williams* (Mythopoeic Press, 2000), and is preparing a collection of scholarly essays, *Gifted Amateurs*, for publication by the Mythopoeic Press. David holds an M. Libr. from the University of Washington, and has worked as a catalog librarian at Stanford University and elsewhere. He is the Guest of Honor for Mythcon 52.

**Birgitte Bremerkamp** graduated cum laude from the MA Literary Studies: English Literature and Culture programme at Leiden University, the Netherlands, in June 2020. Her thesis entitled *The Phoenix as a Symbol of Succession Anxiety in Early Modern Literature* examines the rise and fall of phoenix symbolism in early modern English literature and the symbol’s unique connection to Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603). Birgitte’s research interests, beside of Tolkien studies, are medieval and early modern British literature and culture, diplomatic history, and court studies.

**Marie Bretagnolle** is a French doctoral student whose work focuses on the illustrations created for British and American editions of J.R.R. and Christopher Tolkien’s Middle-earth texts. She is preparing her PhD under the joint supervision of Vincent Ferré, a renowned specialist of J.R.R. and Christopher Tolkien (Paris Est-Créteil university), and Isabelle Gadoin, who specialises in text-image relationships (Poitiers university). She has presented her work at various Tolkien Society events since 2019, interviewed Alan Lee for the French national Library in February 2020, and is the host of Nerdanel’s Workshop, a Tolkien Society smial for artists.

**Martha Celis-Mendoza** (Mexico, Universidad Iberoamericana) is a lecturer and translator; she holds a PhD. in Hispanic Literatures and an MA in Translation, both from El Colegio de México, and a BA in English from National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) with a dissertation on the importance of music in Tolkien’s works. She is the head of the Translation Diploma Program at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City and has taught several different courses related to Translation and Comparative Literature at UNAM, IBERO and AMETLI, among others, where she always includes Tolkien-related materials. She has written articles and several conference presentations about Translation Studies, women translators, Mexican 20th Century writers, detective fiction, Shakespeare and J.R.R. Tolkien.

**Kathryn Colvin** (ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0940-2546) is an American undergraduate majoring in English. Her primary research interests involve intersections of villainy and heroism, tensions between the individual and society, and portrayals of the supernatural in British literature. Kathryn’s works include the articles “Sepulchral Sensuality and Heretical Heavens in *Wuthering Heights* and *Romeo and Juliet*” (in press), “‘Her Enchanted Hair’: Rossetti, ‘Lady Lilith,’ and the Victorian Fascination with Hair as Influences on Tolkien” (published in *Mythlore*, Issue 137), and “A ‘Furnace-Burning Heart’: Shakespeare’s Richard III as Heroic Villain.”

**Janet Brennan Croft** is Associate University Librarian at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the author of *War in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Praeger, 2004; winner, Mythopoeic

Society Award for Inklings Studies). She has written on J.R.R. Tolkien, Terry Pratchett, Lois McMaster Bujold, Joss Whedon, and other authors, TV shows, and movies, and is editor or co-editor of many collections of literary essays, the most recent being *'Something Has Gone Crack': New Perspectives on Tolkien in the Great War* (Walking Tree, 2019). She edits the refereed scholarly journal *Mythlore*.

**Giovanni Carmine Costabile** (Mphil) born in Italy in 1987. Independent scholar, translator, private teacher. He published on Tolkien on academic journals *Tolkien Studies* (2017), *Mythlore* (2018), *Settentrione* (2020), and *Inklings Jahrbuch* (2017), and contributed to Tolkien Society's Peter Roe series (2017, 2019), and to a Walking Tree volume which was finalist at Tolkien Society Awards 2019. He was a finalist at Medieval Philosophy Marco Arosio Award 2019, hosted by Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Rome. His monograph on Tolkien (2018) was well received in Italy. He is the official translator into English of "Pirin" fantasy saga by Swiss talent Sebastiano B. Brocchi.

**Lynne Darga** (MBA, 2016) is a finance analyst with a great love of science fiction and fantasy. She has served as a steward in the Mythopoeic Society for several years and looks forward to helping host the Halfling Mythcon and challenging members in a social event of Tolkien, science fiction & fantasy, and Mythopoeic trivia games.

**Rebecca Davis** (MLitt, Glasgow, 2016) is an instructor at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. In addition to first-year writing courses, she also teaches Introduction to Folklore, Introduction to Literature, and Creative Writing. Fantasy literature, the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, fairy tales, and young adult literature form the crux of Rebecca's research interest; her master's thesis examined the subversion of the roles of hero, heroine, and villain in modern re-tellings of fairy tales. Outside of the academic sphere, Rebecca is a member of the production team for *The Prancing Pony Podcast*, a podcast dedicated to the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, where she serves as "Barliman" and answers listener questions. She also happens to be extremely fond of tea.

**Jessica Dickinson Goodman** is a fantasy and science fiction writer with pieces published in *The Oakland Review* and *RFD*; she's been anthologized in *Geek Out*, *Hashtag Queer* and *Imagoes*. In her non-writing life, she's served as a scheduler to now-U.S. Vice President Senator Kamala D. Harris; is the Board President of the Internet Society: San Francisco Bay Area Chapter; and is one of the youngest women—and only queer woman—ever elected to run an Odd Fellows lodge in the state of California. She graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a B.S. in Ethic, History, and Public Policy, a minor in Opera, and 3 years of Arabic.

**Guillermo Don Juan** is a designer and cartoonist, who has dedicated a large part of his life to graphic design and illustration, with great fascination for reading imaginative fiction and for literary dissemination; he is a member and collaborator of the project *Crónicas D&D*, and has previously contributed with different conferences related to fantasy and science fiction literature; likewise, he has previously taught design and drawing classes for the general public. He supports the Geek subculture in all its expressions.

**David Emerson** is an independent scholar who has presented on various topics at past Mythcons, including animation, Neil Gaiman, the hero's journey, Michael Moorcock, and Tolkien's poem "Errantry."

**Richard Fahey** graduated from University of Notre Dame with a PhD in English (2020) and currently works as Blog Manager & Contributor at the Medieval Institute's "Medieval Studies Research Blog" and Managing Book Review Editor for *Religion & Literature* at Notre Dame. Richard specializes in Old English, Middle English, Old Norse-Icelandic, Old Saxon and Latin literature, and his research interests include wonders, monsters, riddles, heroism, syncretism, allegory, intellectual history, medievalism and public humanities. Richard is currently working on transforming his recent dissertation into a monograph, titled *Psychomachic Monstrosity in Beowulf* and on editing a collection for Lexington Book, titled *White Wizard Male Privilege* that explores gender and racial bias in representations of magic-users.

**Alicia Fox-Lenz** is an independent scholar interested in studying Tolkien through a Cultural Studies lens and expanding the mantle of mythopoeic literature to interactive narrative platforms. More specifically, her work examines the applicability of Tolkien to a modern audience through reception, adaptation, and juxtaposition to pop culture media, as well as contextualizing the Legend of Zelda franchise as a work of mythopoeia. She has been published in *Critical Insights: The Hobbit*, *"Something Has Gone Crack": New Perspectives on J.R.R. Tolkien in the Great War*, *Mythopoeic Narrative in The Legend of Zelda*, and is currently editing a collection tentatively titled *"I'm Going on an Adventure": Seeking Tolkien's Influence in Game Design and Culture*.

**Verlyn Flieger** is one of the most prolific and beloved scholars in Tolkien studies. Well-known to Mythcon attendees, she won Mythopoeic Scholarship Awards for *A Question of Time: J.R.R. Tolkien's Road to Faerie* (1998), for *Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on The History of Middle-earth* (co-edited with Carl Hostetter, 2002), and *Green Suns and Faërie: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien* (2013). Over the years, she has also been a Scholar Guest of Honor for three Mythcons. Retired now from the University of Maryland in 2012, she is co-editor of the journal *Tolkien Studies* and has written fiction as well.

**Craig Franson**, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of English at La Salle University in Philadelphia. His research centers on British Romanticism and its ongoing cultural, theoretical, and political legacies. He has publications and ongoing projects treating representations of pain in British romantic poetry, the rhetoric of sympathy in 18th-century Scottish medical discourse, and the politics of fantasy in the American "culture wars." He has published in the MLA approaches to teaching series; he is a review editor for the undergraduate journal, *Watcher Junior*; and he is currently writing a critical history of J. R. R. Tolkien's right-wing readership.

**Matthew Gidney** lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee with his wife and 9 month-old son. He recently received an M.A. in English from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, and will be teaching rhetoric and composition there and at Covenant College this fall. Full-time, Matthew works as the Director of Programming for the Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Tennessee. In their free time, Matthew and his family enjoy taking walks along the Tennessee river and along the forested ridge behind their home.

**James Gifford** is Professor of English in the School of the Humanities at Fairleigh Dickinson University—Vancouver Campus. He has published several books, critical editions, and articles on modernism and anarchism. His book *A Modernist Fantasy: Anarchism, Modernism, & the*

*Radical Fantastic* (2018) developed directly from his *Personal Modernisms: Anarchist Networks & the Later Avant-Gardes* (2014). In Spring 2022, his critical edition of the 19th century travel writer, poet, and author of fantastical long poems, Edward Taylor Fletcher, *Of Sunken Islands & Pestilence*, will be released by Athabasca University Press.

**Nyssa Gilkey** is a mechanical engineer. She has been playing video games since *Doom* came out (she was 5). She added *D&D* 9 years ago. She is a video game completionist, a stickler for technical rules and plays *D&D* the exact opposite of how she plays video games.

**Matthew David Goodwin** is a scholar, an editor, and a translator. His research is centered on the experience of migration, in particular how Latinx writers are using science fiction and fantasy to explore migration. He is the editor of *Latinx Rising: An Anthology of Latinx Science Fiction and Fantasy* as well as the young adult collection *Speculative Fiction for Dreamers*. His study of Latinx science fiction, *The Latinx Files: Race, Migration, and Space Aliens* was recently released through Rutgers University Press. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Chicana/o Studies Department at the University of New Mexico.

**Theodora Goss** is the World Fantasy, Locus, and Mythopoeic Award-winning author of the short story and poetry collections *In the Forest of Forgetting* (2006), *Songs for Ophelia* (2014), and *Snow White Learns Witchcraft* (2019), as well as novella *The Thorn and the Blossom* (2012), debut novel *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* (2017), and sequels *European Travel for the Monstrous Gentlewoman* (2018) and *The Sinister Mystery of the Mesmerizing Girl* (2019). She has been a finalist for the Nebula, Crawford, and Shirley Jackson Awards, as well as on the Tiptree Award Honor List. Her work has been translated into fifteen languages. She teaches literature and writing at Boston University and in the Stonecoast MFA Program.

**Kaelyn Harris** (she/they) is a senior undergraduate English and Hebrew & Jewish Studies major at the University of Kentucky, currently working on her undergraduate thesis. Her research interests include the works of Marie de France, Jewish women in literature, folkloric origins of modern monsters, and of course, Tolkien's dwarves.

**Reese Hogan** is a nonbinary transmasc science fiction author from New Mexico. They have published three novels, and the latest, *Shrouded Loyalties from Angry Robot*, was a Best SFF of August 2019 pick by both Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Their short fiction has been published in *The Decameron Project* and *Clockwork, Curses, and Coal*, an anthology of steampunk fairy tale retellings. Reese is represented by Cameron McClure at Donald Maass Agency.

**John R. Holmes** has been teaching Medieval Literature and Tolkien at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio since 1985. He is a founding member of the editorial board of the online *Journal of Tolkien Research*, and has published some two dozen articles on Tolkien, though he keeps procrastinating on book-length projects. He and his wife Von are now empty nesters in Steubenville where they write, direct, and star in comic Tchaikovsky musicals every Advent.

**Charlotte Honigman** teaches US history by day, is raising two children, and writes fantasy and historical fiction in her copious spare time. 2020 WSFA Small Press Award for Short Fiction winner. Her story "The Partisan and the Witch" won the 2020 WSFA Small Press Award for

Short Fiction. As C.G. Griffin she is the author of *Last Mass*, and the forthcoming *Virtuous Women*. She is motivated by magic, myth, history, and humor. And coffee.

**El Hudson** is an undergraduate at Wellesley College, pursuing a degree in Classics and English. She works on Athenian tragedy, Latin epic poetry and historiography, and 19th and early 20th century weird fiction. When she's not reading, writing, or teaching, you can often find her on long walks around Lake Waban with her cat Maesie.

**Scott E. Johnson** teaches English at Oakton Community College in Illinois. He completed an independent study on twentieth-century Arthurian lit as an undergrad, and deeply wishes that the faculty he worked with in grad school had shared his interests in Arthuriana and genre fiction. He lives with his three sons who are, one by one, deserting him for college and other adult pursuits. They think he needs to get a dog so that he has “something to take care of,” but he’s currently holding out for a raven.

**Reno Lauro** received his PhD from the University of St. Andrews where he wrote on Tolkien's philosophy of mythopoeia as a response to Jean Baudrillard's hyperreality. While completing his dissertation, he spent two years working for Terrence Malick on the Palme d'Or winning film *The Tree of Life* (2011), an experience which profoundly influenced his reading of Tolkien. Over the last ten years, Reno has been working at the crossroads of digital and classical education with an emphasis on history, philosophy, and eliciting 'the smile of life' from technology. He is currently working on his first book, *Tolkien's House of Being*.

**Yoon Ha Lee's** first novel, *Ninefox Gambit*, won the Locus Award for best first novel and was a finalist for the Hugo, Nebula, and Clarke awards; its sequels, *Raven Stratagem* and *Revenant Gun*, were also Hugo finalists. His book *Dragon Pearl* won the Mythopoeic Award for children's literature and the Locus Award for best YA novel, and was a *New York Times* bestseller. His short fiction has appeared in venues such as *Tor.com*, *Audubon Magazine*, *Clarkesworld*, and *Lightspeed*. Lee lives in Louisiana with his family and an extremely lazy cat, and has not yet been eaten by gators.

**David Lenander** is a long-time Society member, and past Steward. He has served on most of the Mythopoeic Awards committees since their inception. For more than 45 years he has been the principal organizer of the monthly Rivendell Group discussions in Minnesota, and active in the Society apas discussions, especially Once Upon a Time, devoted to Children's Fantasy.

**Tim Lenz** is co-host of the weekly podcast Dance Robot Dance, which just celebrated its 5th anniversary of discussing all things nerdy and geeky from a decidedly NSFW point of view. He has been attending MythCon since 2017, and immediately gained an appreciation for its unique blend of academics, fannish content, camaraderie, and goblin head-smashing. Tim has a PhD in biochemistry from Georgia Tech, but has also dabbled in media studies—his undergrad thesis at McMaster University explored Cold War science fiction as a reflection of trends in the public consciousness. He is also co-host of the ‘*Jeopardy!*-famous’ annual Middle-earth Movie Marathon.

**Eileen Marie Moore** teaches Voice at Cleveland State University and the Oberlin Community Music School. She received both her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Voice from

Indiana University. A composer/pianist as well as singer, she premieres “Maidens of Middle-earth” song-cycles annually (since 2011) for the Tolkien Symposium at the International Congress on Medieval Studies and is also the composer/librettist of the opera, *Farmer Giles of Ham* (2012). As a Tolkien linguist, she is editor of *The Tolkien Dictionary errata* (2007) and the *Comparative Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus of Tolkien’s Languages*, now in its Nineteenth Edition. She lives in Bay Village, Ohio, with her husband, Mark, and their cat, Clover.

**Bradley McIlwain** is inspired by songs in nature, and examining our relationships within it. His poems have appeared in the *New Verse News*, *Platform Magazine* (Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia) and in anthologies such as *Something’s Brewing*, Kind of a Hurricane Press (2014), *The 5-2 Crime Poetry Weekly Vol. 2* (2013) and in *Love Notes: A Collection of Romantic Poetry* from Vagabondage Press (2012). His book *Elementals* (IOWI, 2015) is available on Amazon and Indigo. Bradley is the founder of Roasted Poet Coffee, where coffee and literature are two of three of his favourite pastimes. The third is reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* each New Year's day.

**Wendy Nikel** is a speculative fiction author with a degree in elementary education, a fondness for road trips, and a terrible habit of forgetting where she's left her cup of tea. Her short fiction has been published in *Analog*, *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, *Nature*, and elsewhere. Her time travel novella series, beginning with *The Continuum*, is available from World Weaver Press. She is also the Editor-in-Chief at *Flash Fiction Online*. For more info, visit [wendynikel.com](http://wendynikel.com).

**Sofia Parrila** is an MA student in Transnational and Comparative Literatures at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. Her thesis is an ecofeminist analysis of middle-grade fantasy literature, and her other research interests include fan culture, queer and feminist theories, and the *Kalevala*. Sofia graduated in 2019 from the U of A’s Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies with a BA-Honors in Comparative Literature and a minor in Creative Writing. During her undergrad, she was President of The Last Alliance: U of A Tolkien Society; she currently serves as the club’s Treasurer.

**Robin Anne Reid** retired in May 2020. After refusing to do the huge portfolio application required to apply for emerita status, she is enjoying being an independent scholar who writes for the love of it and in order to finish ALL the WIPs left over from her academic career. Her current major projects include a queer anthology on Tolkien's work as well as various short pieces relating to feminist speculative fiction. Upcoming projects include the *Race, Racisms, and Tolkien* anthology and a monograph on atheist, agnostic, and animist fans of Tolkien's legendarium. She runs the Tolkien Studies Area for the national Popular Culture Conference and encourages all interested in Tolkien's legendarium and the adaptations and transformative works to come hang out with us in Seattle in 2022!

**Vicki Ronn** is an Associate Professor of English at Friends University. Her scholarly interests include the depiction of old women in fantasy literature, the fiber arts and their connection to literature, and Asian fantasy in both television and written genres. She has been a member of the Mythopoeic Society for several years and has served as Awards Steward until this year. She has



taught classes on various topics including *The Lord of the Rings*, graphic novels, mythology, and U. S. Women's History and Literature.

**John Rosegrant** has loved and studied the works of Tolkien since *The Hobbit* was read to him when he was six years old. He grew up to be a psychoanalyst in private practice who has helped adults, teens, and children find meaning in the face of disillusionment. He has published numerous papers on topics including play therapy, dreams, fairy tales, Harry Potter, the World of Warcraft computer game, Ursula Le Guin, and Tolkien, and is also the author of *The Gates of Inland* Young Adult Fantasy series.

**Cait Rottler** (she/hers) is an ecologist by training (PhD from the University of Wyoming) and an equestrian by choice. Her interests are numerous and she's never met a craft she won't start once and then drop the second something distracts her. She joined the Hobbit Society at the University of New Mexico to make friends, but didn't actually like Tolkien until she read *The Silmarillion* and fell in love with it. Druids are her favorite *D&D* class.

**Roy Schwartz** is the author of *Is Superman Circumcised? The Complete Jewish History of the World's Greatest Hero* and *The Darkness in Lee's Closet and the Others Waiting There*. Roy has written for newspapers, magazines, websites, academic organizations, law firms, tech companies, toy companies, and production studios. He has taught English and writing at the City University of New York and is a former writer-in-residence fellow at the New York Public Library. He can be found at royschwartz.com and on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as @RealRoySchwartz.

**Carl B. Sell** is the TRIO SSS Writing Specialist at Lock Haven University. Carl's research explores appropriations of Arthurian legend narratives, characters, and themes in popular culture as an extension of the medieval adaptive tradition. He serves as a member of the advisory boards for the Association for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching of the Medieval in Popular Culture and the Alliance for the Promotion of Research on the Matter of Britain. He is the author of various film and literature reviews on medievalist and scholarly blogs and his own website, as well as journal articles on Arthurian topics and DC's Aquaman.

**Kenton L. Sena** holds a B.A. in Biology from Asbury University, and an M.S. in Forestry and a Ph.D. in Integrated Plant and Soil Sciences from the University of Kentucky. His research and professional interests include urban forest ecology, forest restoration, and ecology and the environment in imaginative literature. He is currently a lecturer in the Lewis Honors College at the University of Kentucky, where he teaches HON 140 (Knowledge and Society), HON 152 (Restoration Ecology in the Commonwealth), and HON 301 (The Ecology of Middle-earth: Environmental themes in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*).

**Will Sherwood** is the Education Secretary for the Tolkien Society. He runs their seminar series, reading days and is involved in the ongoing project to create educational resources for teachers and readers across the globe. Will further researches Tolkien and Romanticism in his spare time and has published on Tolkien, James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in the *Journal of Tolkien Research*.

**Lissa Sloan's** poems and short stories are published in *Enchanted Conversation*, *Krampusnacht: Twelve Nights of Krampus*, *Frozen Fairy Tales*, and *Skull & Pestle: New Tales of Baba Yaga*. "Death in Winter," her contribution to *Frozen Fairy Tales*, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

**Lee Speth** was born in Los Angeles and raised in the suburb of Alhambra where he still lives. After earning his BA in English from Calif. State Univ., Los Angeles, he began reading the Three Authors in the 1960s. He joined both the Mythopoeic Society and the discussion group Mydgard in 1972, and attended Mythcon 3 that year. He has led Mydgard for decades and joined the Council of Stewards as Society Orders Manager in 1979. He married Dolores Espinosa in 1984 and worked as an elections administrator for LA County 1974-2013. He is now retired.

**Jennifer W. Spirko** has worked as a librarian, journalist and teacher, and now she is the Volunteer Development Manager for the Girl Scout Council of the Southern Appalachians. She has taught at the University of Tennessee, North Carolina State University, Pellissippi State Community College, Meredith College and Maryville College. She holds an M.A. from the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham, UK, and is ABD in Renaissance/Medieval studies at the University of Tennessee. She lives in East Tennessee with her husband, two young-adult offspring and five cats. She frequently leads pub trivia and always includes at least one Tolkien question.

**Danica Stojanovic** is a literature aficionado pursuing a PhD in fantasy theatre and actively trying to breach the gap between academia and fantasy studies. After a BA and two MAs in English Philology, she is proud to have found a venue for academic self-expression that supports her greatest passion and interests. Currently, she is dreaming about an oak-paneled library, publishing a children's book, and chairing a department of popular Anglophone literature at a university one day.

**Rivera Sun** has written numerous books and novels, including *The Dandelion Insurrection*, and the award-winning Ari Ara Series. She is a nationwide trainer in strategy for nonviolent movements, the editor of Nonviolence News, and works with many peace and justice organizations. She is the Author Guest of Honor for Mythcon 52. [www.riverasun.com](http://www.riverasun.com)

**Robert T. Tally, Jr.**, is the NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities and Professor of English at Texas State University. His books include *Topophilia: Place, Narrative, and the Spatial Imagination*; *Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism*; *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature*; *Utopia in the Age of Globalization*; *Spatiality*; and, as editor, *Spatial Literary Studies*; *Teaching Space, Place, and Literature*; *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*; *Literary Cartographies*; and *Geocritical Explorations*. Tally is also the editor of the Palgrave Macmillan book series Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies.

**Paul Tankard** (PhD) is Associate Professor of English at the University of Otago in New Zealand, where he teaches composition, creative non-fiction and fantasy literature. His research interest in the essays and journalism of the long eighteenth century has produced several publications and most notably his annotated collection *Facts and Inventions: Selections from the Journalism of James Boswell* (Yale UP, 2014), in which he presents a wide,

closely-annotated selection of Boswell's journalism, the great majority not published since the 1700s. He brought to light Mary Fairburn's correspondence with Tolkien, and her illustrations to *The Lord of the Rings*, which Tolkien claimed made him think that "an illustrated edition might be a good thing."

**William Thompson** is an associate professor at MacEwan University, Canada. He teaches courses in both children's literature and science fiction. He has written articles on L.M. Montgomery and J.K. Rowling, and his latest piece, "Of Dying Gods and Lamp-Posts: Repositioning C.S. Lewis's *Narniad* for the Twenty-First Century," appeared in *The Inklings and Culture: A Harvest of Scholarship from the Inklings Society of Canada*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020. He is totally blind, considers coffee a food group, and he loves to walk and read, usually at the same time.

**Brian Thomson** graduated with History from the University of British Columbia and will begin his graduate program in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Trinity Western University, which is home to the Inklings Institute of Canada. Brian led an Inklings-influenced book club during his undergraduate years and hopes to pursue this interest further into the academic level. His current interests lie in non-traditional ways to tell stories as well as the role narratives have on our society.

**Michael A. Torregrossa** is a graduate of the Medieval Studies program at the University of Connecticut (Storrs) and works as an adjunct instructor in English in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. His research focuses on popular culture's adaptation and appropriation of literary classics, including the Arthurian legend, *Beowulf*, *Dracula*, and *Frankenstein*. In addition, Michael is the founder of The Alliance for the Promotion of Research on the Matter of Britain and The Association for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching of the Medieval in Popular Culture; he also serves as editor for these organizations' various blogs and moderator of their discussion lists. Besides these activities, Michael is also active in the Northeast Popular Culture/American Culture Association and organizes sessions for their annual conference in the fall. Michael is currently Monsters and the Monstrous Area Chair for NEPCA, but he previously served as its Fantastic (Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Horror) Area Chair, a position he held from 2009-2018.

**Robert Field Tredray** has been a Tolkien fan ever since he first read *The Lord of the Rings* in 1964, in the summer between his junior and senior years in High School. He received the Master of Arts degree in English from Northeastern Illinois University with a concentration in Medieval Literature. He has presented papers to the Mythopoeic Society, the Novus et Antiquus Conference, and the International Congress on Medieval Studies. He now lives in Robbinsdale, MN.

**Sarena Ulibarri** (she/her) is the Editor-in-Chief of World Weaver Press, an independent publisher of speculative fiction with a focus on fairy tale retellings and optimistic science fiction. She is also a short fiction author who has published approximately 50 stories in places like *Lightspeed Magazine*, *GigaNotoSaurus*, *DreamForge*, and *NewMyths.com*. She is currently working on a novel that reimagines Robin Hood legends in a science fiction setting.

**Aline Esperanza Maza Vázquez** (Mexico, AMETLI) is a geophysical engineer, and translator in the making. She is fluent in English, French, German, and is currently studying Korean. Collaborator of the online literary broadcast project *Crónicas D&D*. Avid reader, aspiring polyglot, and book collector committed to the dissemination of science and literature. Her background is in Natural Sciences and she currently works at the Servicio Meteorológico Nacional (National Weather Service of Mexico). At the moment she is training to become a literary translator at AMETLI.

**Jorge de la Vega** (México, Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México) is a writer, translator and blogger with a background in Communication Science and Creative Writing. He has participated as a lecturer and workshop leader in numerous cultural events such as UNAM's (National Autonomous University of Mexico) Fiesta del Libro y la Rosa, the International Children and Young Adults' Book Fair (FILIJ), and the celebration for World Book and Copyright Day at CENART's (National Center for the Arts) Library of the Arts, among others. He is also a co-founder of the online literary broadcast project *Crónicas D&D*. He is fond of reading, video games, classic rock music, and imaginative fiction.

**Rachael Warmington** is an instructor at Seton Hall University. She earned her B.A. in English from Montclair State University, M.A. in English from Seton Hall University, her MFA at CUNY City College and is a doctoral candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Rachael is also the editor-in-chief of the academic journal, *Watchung Review*. Her research focuses on themes of Arthurian Legend in medieval texts and in contemporary literature, film and television adaptations and appropriations and how these themes create the space that challenges oppression in its various forms, but have also been used to perpetuate racism, sexism and religious intolerance.

**Lana A. Whited** edited the first collection of essays on the Harry Potter series, *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter* (Missouri, 2002) as well as Critical Insights series volumes on the Harry Potter novels (2015, with M. Katherine Grimes) and the Hunger Games trilogy (2016). She is currently preparing the manuscript of *The Ivory Tower, Harry Potter, and Beyond*, a volume featuring essays on all Rowling's published novels and the *Fantastic Beasts* series. Dr. Whited is director of the Boone Honors Program and professor of English at Ferrum College in Virginia and earned degrees at Emory & Henry College (BA), College of William & Mary (MA), Hollins (MA), and UNC Greensboro (PhD). She has received the Exemplary Teaching Award from the Council of Higher Education of the United Methodist Church and was a 2016 nominee for the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia's Outstanding Faculty Awards. Her most recent book is *Murder, in Fact: Death and Disillusionment in the American True Crime Novel* (McFarland, 2020).

**Donald T. Williams**, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Toccoa Falls College. A border dweller, he stays permanently camped out on the borders between theology and literature, serious scholarship and pastoral ministry, Narnia and Middle-earth. He is the author of thirteen books, most recently *Deeper Magic: The Theology behind the Writings of C. S. Lewis* (Square Halo Books, 2016), *"An Encouraging Thought": The Christian Worldview in the Writings of J. R. R. Tolkien* (Christian Publishing House, 2018), *The Young Christian's Survival Guide: Common Questions Young Christians are Asked about God, the Bible, and the Christian Faith Answered*

(Christian Publishing House, 2019), *Stars through the Clouds: The Collected Poetry of Donald T. Williams* (Lantern Hollow Press, 2020), and *Ninety-Five Theses for a New Reformation: A Road Map for Post-Evangelical Christianity* (Semper Reformanda Publications, 2021).

**Dennis Wise** is a lecturer for the University of Arizona interested in political theory and epic fantasy. He holds a PhD in 20th- and 21st-century transatlantic literature, and his academic writing has appeared in places like *Tolkien Studies*, *Mythlore*, and *The Journal of Tolkien Research*, among others. He's currently working on a critical anthology of modern alliterative poetry, *Speculative Poetry and the Modern Alliterative Revival*, which is under advance contract from Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Wise also serves as reviews editor for *Fafnir—Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*.

**Helen Young** first read *The Lord of the Rings* early enough in life that she still sometimes gets nightmares about Nazgûl. She turned her love of fantasy novels into a profession and now works as a Lecturer in Literary Studies at Deakin University, Australia.

**Joseph Rex Young**, PhD, lives in Dunedin, New Zealand where he pursues his research interests in the intellectual history of post-Enlightenment supernatural literature. His most notable publication to date his 2019 book *George R.R. Martin and the Fantasy Form*, in which he links Martin's Song of Ice and Fire novels to the fantasy tradition of the Inklings by demonstrating their common neo-Romantic impact. He has also published severally on the works of E.R. Eddison, explored intermedial fantasy readings of contemporary Polish surrealism, and taught at universities in New Zealand, Germany, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and could get a lot more done if he didn't have to spend so much time on job applications.

## Closing Ceremonies Songs

### **The Chorea Magna: The Mythopoeic Society anthem, sung to the tune of "Simple Gifts"**

The Dance is the singing of the stars at their birth,  
 The Dance is a tree with its roots in utmost earth,  
 The Dance is the gamboling of balls in a game,  
 With their source a hand, and their end the same.

*Chorus:* Dare, then, the measure of the Dance,  
 Follow the Fool in his reckless fall,  
 In his madness, joy, his destiny in chance,  
 For all luck is good and the Naught is all!

The Dance knows the wounding that the earth cannot heal,  
 The Dance knows the weight and the flaming of the wheel,  
 The Dance knows the binding to the stake torched at dawn -

But the Dancers, stilled, still go dancing on.

*Chorus:* Dare, then, the measure of the Dance,  
Follow the Fool in his reckless fall,  
In his madness, joy, his destiny in chance,  
For all luck is good and the Naught is all!

The Dance is a Lion and a Child locked in play,  
The Dance is a feast on a royal wedding day,  
The Dance is a city where the time-scattered meet,  
And the Glory blazes in each complete.

*Chorus:* Dare, then, the measure of the Dance,  
Follow the Fool in his reckless fall,  
In his madness, joy, his destiny in chance,  
For all luck is good and the Naught is all!

### **The Baby and The Bird**

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*Please see David Bratman's transcription of Diana's melody, below*

Old Rome had many taverns  
Devoted to the vine,  
Where Ovid pledged each new love  
In red Falernian wine;  
Catullus, shamed by Lesbia,  
Poured out his grief in verse;  
Apuleus noted follies,  
And pondered which was worse.

*Chorus:*

But the place that draws me ever  
When my fancy's running wild,  
Is a little pub in Oxford  
Called The Eagle and the Child,  
The Eagle and the Child, oh,

Or else, as I have heard  
 Its regulars all called it—  
 The Baby and the Bird!

The company was lively  
 In Soutwark's Tabard Inn,  
 When Chaucer and the Pilgrims  
 Were telling tales within,  
 And on the Canterbury road  
 They took that April day,  
 And at the other hostels  
 Where they stayed upon their way.

*Chorus:*

But the place that draws me ever  
 When my fancy's running wild,  
 Is a little pub in Oxford  
 Called The Eagle and the Child,  
 The Eagle and the Child, oh,  
 Or else, as I have heard  
 Its regulars all called it—  
 The Baby and the Bird!

When Villon, gutter-poet,  
 Reeled through the Paris night,  
 Drunk on verse and hypocras  
 And looking for a fight,  
 The Pomme de Pin, the Cheval Blanc  
 All welcomed him, and more,  
 With wine at every table  
 And doxies at each door.

*Chorus:*

But the place that draws me ever  
 When my fancy's running wild,

Is a little pub in Oxford  
 Called The Eagle and the Child,  
 The Eagle and the Child, oh,  
 Or else, as I have heard  
 Its regulars all called it—  
 The Baby and the Bird!

Of all the City's taverns,  
 When Bess was England's Queen,  
 The Mermaid, undisputed, ruled  
 The literary scene.  
 Each Global play was played again  
 And christened in brown ale,  
 Whde Shakespeare, or Ben Jonson,  
 Stood up to tell the tale.

*Chorus:*

But the place that draws me ever  
 When my fancy's running wild,  
 Is a little pub in Oxford  
 Called The Eagle and the Child,  
 The Eagle and the Child, oh,  
 Or else, as I have heard  
 Its regulars all called it—  
 The Baby and the Bird!

Augustan wits made merry  
 At London's Cheshire Cheese—  
 The topic was no matter,  
 So that the manner please—  
 Be it Love or Politicks,  
 'Twas scandalous, I've heard,  
 And Johnson had his Boswell  
 To write down every word.



*Chorus:*

But the place that draws me ever  
When my fancy's running wild,  
Is a little pub in Oxford  
Called The Eagle and the Child,  
The Eagle and the Child, oh,  
Or else, as I have heard  
Its regulars all called it—  
The Baby and the Bird!

They sing of famous taverns,  
But considering them all,  
The one where I had rather  
Been a fly upon the wall,  
Would be the Inn where Tolkien,  
Lewis, Williams too,  
Met with the other Inklings  
Asking, "Who has something new?"

*Chorus:*

But the place that draws me ever  
When my fancy's running wild,  
Is a little pub in Oxford  
Called The Eagle and the Child,  
The Eagle and the Child, oh,  
Or else, as I have heard  
Its regulars all called it—  
The Baby and the Bird!

