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## Editorial

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## Mythcon 51: A VIRTUAL “HALFLING” MYTHCON

July 31 - August 1, 2021 (Saturday and Sunday)

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-51.htm>



## Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-52.htm>



WE ARE DELIGHTED to be able to announce that with our fall 2013 issue, individual subscribers will have the option of switching to electronic delivery of *Mythlore*. As with *Mythprint*, subscribers who choose this option will be sent a link for a PDF download. This option will not be available for institutions at this time. The cost will be \$25.00 for non-members and \$15.00 for Mythopoeic Society members, world-wide. Please watch for a renewal notice with this new information, or check our website.

We will also be simplifying the numbering of *Mythlore* by dropping the fiction that we are a quarterly publishing two double issues per year, and reclassifying the journal as a semiannual. Thus the next issue will be volume 32, issue 1, whole number 123.

By the luck of the draw, after having only one Tolkien paper in the previous issue, this issue focuses entirely on Tolkien. Joyce Tally Lionarons leads off with a stimulating look at the parallels and contrasts between imagery associated with spiders and Elves, especially female elves, in Tolkien's legendarium, and how this imagery of light and shadow, spinning and weaving, climbing and descending, also underpins themes of sexuality and fertility in Middle-earth.

Nicholas Birns's paper deals with intermediacy in *The Hobbit*; it's especially concerned with Bilbo's characterization, unusual in children's literature, as middle-aged, but also addresses other issues of world-building and story structure that reinforce this motif of "starting in the middle": maps, the sense of the past, racial characteristics and relations. Birns draws interesting contrasts with the *Alice in Wonderland* and *Oz* books.

Josh B. Long addresses the perennial question of J.R.R. Tolkien's dislike for C.S. Lewis's Narnia books, carefully analyzing numerous first- and second-hand accounts from biographies, interviews, and letters. A previously

unpublished letter from Tolkien to Eileen Elgar adds a new and more nuanced element to our understanding of this issue.

Tolkien is unfortunately underrated as a theorist in literary studies—in fact, alas, generally invisible to the mainstream. Benjamin Saxton draws attention to his ideas about sub-creation and allegorical “dominion” of the reader, contrasting Tolkien’s stated and implied theories with those of Roland Barthes, and elucidating Tolkien’s concern with “the delicate balance between authors, authority, and interpretive freedom.” Saxton draws on “Leaf by Niggle,” *The Silmarillion*, and *The Lord of the Rings* for examples of Tolkien’s theories in action.

Phillip Mitchell adds to our understanding of Tolkien’s created theology and the place of Faerie in his sub-creation by examining contemporary real world theological debates which might have influenced his thinking, including discussions of the supernatural like Pius XII’s 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*.

Finally, E. J. Christie examines two elements that likely went into Tolkien’s development of Sméagol/Gollum’s character and actions: the increase in cultural, political, and philosophical engagement with issues of secrecy, privacy, and espionage starting prior to World War I, and Tolkien’s peculiar talent for “creation from philology” building on \**dēagan* and \**smēagan*, Old English word-elements invoking hiding, concealing, investigation, secrecy, interrogation, and private thought.

We close with a large number of reviews: *C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and the Great War: 1914-1918* by John Bremer; the *Collected Poems* of Hope Mirrlees; *Fantasy, Art, and Life: Essays on George MacDonald, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Other Fantasy Writers* by William Gray; *C.S. Lewis and the Middle Ages* by Robert Boenig; *Sherlock Holmes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Essays on New Adaptations*, edited by Lynnette Porter; *Dancing the Tao: Le Guin and Moral Development* by Sandra J. Lindow; *Hobbit Place-Names: A Linguistic Excursion Through the Shire* by Rainer Nagel; *The Broken Scythe: Death and Immortality in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Roberto Arduini and Claudio A Testi; *The Hobbit Tarot and The Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck and Card Game* from U.S. Games Systems; and *J.K. Rowling: Harry Potter*, edited by Cynthia J. Hallett and Peggy J. Huey.

In addition to the referees on the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, I would also like to thank Bonnie Gaarden, John Garth, John William Houghton, Jason Fisher, and Daniel Snell for their assistance with this issue.

—Janet Brennan Croft