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## Editorial

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## Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021





## EDITORIAL

While the majority of the content of this issue is related to our special theme of “Mythopoeic Children’s Literature,” we reserved a bit of space at the beginning for two very special articles and a selection of general notes, letters, and reviews.

Verlyn Flieger’s Guest of Honor address at Mythcon 50 this summer in San Diego was hailed by those in the audience as an eye-opening new approach to Tolkien as an artist and a person, and we are absolutely thrilled to be able to get it into print so soon after the conference. “The Arch and the Keystone” has already had a profound impact on how I myself approach Tolkien’s inherent contradictions, and I think other *Mythlore* readers will find it just as significant.

We also include the Alexei Kondratiev Student Paper Award winner from Mythcon 50, Sarah O’Dell’s essay on the poetry of Inkling Robert E. Havard, which builds on her Note on Havard in *Mythlore* #131. Sarah makes an excellent case for a reconsideration of the “medical Inkling,” and the awards committee was unanimous in its appreciation for her entry.

Guest Editor Donna R. White, who has been a member of *Mythlore*’s editorial board since 2001, introduces the special contents of this issue and explains why we felt a focus on mythopoeic fantasy for children was important enough to merit an issue of its own. We have a well-balanced selection of essays on young adult and children’s books by the Inklings and by other authors, and a note that reminds us not to neglect other formats than print, as well as an assortment of reviews of recent relevant critical and scholarly works.

Usually in this editorial I note a progression of ideas from one paper to another. In this issue, instead, I see a web of connections: a book referenced briefly in a note gets a full review a few dozen pages later; a theory or concept touched on in one paper is challenged in another; a review of a book on robots in the ancient world resonates with a later paper on robot-like characters in science fiction and fantasy; two papers address adolescent masculinity in deeply different contexts; less-well-known Inklings are given their due in both the general and special content. These resonances make for a rewarding issue to read cover-to-cover, and I hope you will enjoy discovering them.

However, one piece of news we have to announce is good news for those who do NOT tend to read *Mythlore* cover-to-cover. We have lifted the one-year embargo on content placed on the online journal platform at

<https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/>. Now, content from the current issue will be available immediately online as well as to print and electronic subscribers. This benefits not just readers but the authors themselves; their content will begin generating download statistics right away, as well as being discoverable all over the world, meaning their scholarship will more quickly be disseminated and cited and generate the kind of immediate statistical feedback that is ever more essential to academic careers.

The other exciting piece of news about *Mythlore* is that our content is soon to be added to one of the JSTOR family of databases, the *Lives of Literature Victorian Collection*. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, which is a non-profit organization, and is committed to providing content free or low-cost to developing nations around the world, at a cost which is spread among wealthier member institutions and benefits scholarship globally. JSTOR also archives both print and electronic copies in perpetuity. It is such a well-backed-up system that many libraries feel safe disposing of their paper copies of journals in JSTOR if they need the space. JSTOR is also known for historical content, going back to the beginnings of as many of the journals they carry as they can, as will be the case with *Mythlore* and *Tolkien Journal*.

If you would like to keep up with news relating to *Mythlore*, please follow us on Facebook, where we post advance notice of items accepted for upcoming issues, lists of items available for review, and so forth. In Fall 2020 we plan a special issue guest edited by Melanie Rawls on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin; Facebook will be one of the first places to see the Call for Papers.

In addition to the members of the *Mythlore* Editorial Advisory Board, the Mythopoeic Society Council of Stewards, and our ever-dependable referees, I'd also like to express my gratitude to Phillip Fitzsimmons, Reference and Digitization Librarian at Southwestern Oklahoma State University Libraries and our Administrator for *Mythlore* and Society Archives, who has been directing the team adding archival content to <http://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/>, and his assistant Ben Dressler, who joined us at Mythcon in updating the membership on *Mythlore* news and changes. I would especially like to thank guest editor Donna R. White for proposing this special issue, soliciting submissions, and working with me to choose the content, communicate with the authors, and in the end create a thought-provoking theme issue we can all be proud of.

—Janet Brennan Croft