



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,  
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

---

Volume 38  
Number 2

Article 1

---

5-15-2020

## Editorial

Janet Brennan Croft

*Rutgers University - New Brunswick/Piscataway*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Croft, Janet Brennan (2020) "Editorial," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 38 : No. 2 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol38/iss2/1>

This Editorial Introduction is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:  
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSU<sup>TM</sup>

---

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

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





## EDITORIAL

UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES have made this an especially challenging issue to produce. While we were in the process of finalizing content, the COVID-19 pandemic unequivocally made its presence felt in the United States, as it had elsewhere already, and in short order forced the closure of colleges, schools, and libraries nationwide. Instructors scrambled to migrate their courses to online platforms, and librarians quickly put in place ways to continue to support users when they themselves no longer had access to physical collections. At the very head of this editorial, I want to thank the contributors, one and all, for doing the revisions and proofreading I asked of them so quickly under these challenging circumstances, and other friends and colleagues for helping me to locate sources for quotation checking.

Our first paper examines historicism in C.S. Lewis's work as a literary critic, particularly in his thinking about literary periods as both categorically useful and overly limiting. Philip Irving Mitchell examines primarily Lewis's essay "Addison," his address "Imagination and Thought in the Middle Ages," and his introduction to *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* for keys to Lewis's philosophy and technique of writing literary history.

The next paper also examines issues of historicism, this time in the fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien's legendarium writings display a subtle command of the perspectives and aims of different storytellers, as Richard Z. Gallant shows in his examination of the "the chroniclers of Elvish history" and their various motivations.

Weronika Łaszkiewicz returns to our pages with another examination of perennial *Mythlore* favorite Peter S. Beagle's unicorns, this time in two recent works: his novel *In Calabria* (2017) and short story "My Son Heydari and the Karkadann" (2017). Both works place an emphasis on the ineffable numinosity of their very different unicorns.

It is rare to find anything new to say about the question of Tom Bombadil—who he is and what exactly he is doing in *The Lord of the Rings*—and here we have two papers which do just that. Robert B. Chapman-Morales draws attention to Tom's function as an embodiment of joy, and more broadly to the essential revivifying importance of joy to the entire tale. Suzanne Jacobs takes an entirely different approach, using Tolkien's description of Tom as "an enigma (intentionally)" as a prompt to examine parallels in the sorts of medieval

riddles which Tolkien mined to great effect for Gollum and Bilbo's riddle game in *The Hobbit*. Jacobs goes on to explore the complex of symbols and attributes she sees in Tom in other important works of fantasy.

The final paper also deals with riddles—this time, the riddle of flying creatures who sting the unwary with fire. Laurence Smith proposes a unique interpretation of this complex of folkloric and mythical attributes.

We are saddened, as are so many in the fields of fantasy literature and Tolkien studies, by the death of Christopher Tolkien, tireless champion and guardian of his father's legacy. Our Notes section begins with two reminiscences from scholars who worked with him to make this legacy more accessible to all of us, William M. Fliss of the Tolkien Archives at Marquette University and John Rateliff, author of *The History of The Hobbit*.

Our other Notes range widely. Joshua Cole dissects a chapter in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and teases out its lessons for instructors in the classroom. Jim Stockton pulls together information about the Oxford Dante Society and compiles a useful timetable of the participation of three Inklings in its activities. Emily E. Auger provides us with a continuation of her list of Tarot in fantasy novels, begun in issue #132 and here brought up to 2005. We have a review essay by Barbara Prescott on the major new biography of Dorothy L. Sayers and her Oxford circle, which, as a study of a writers' group, inevitably leads to comparisons with the Inklings; plus the usual selection of reviews of recent scholarship, translations, editions, and other works of interest.

It is fortuitous in these difficult times that we lifted the one-year embargo on *Mythlore* content last year; the online platform ensures continuity of access even if we run into difficulties with printing. The Fall 2020 special issue on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin and the Mythopoeic Press volume on cities in Middle-earth have both extended their deadlines for submissions; please see the ads in this issue. The Council of Stewards is also discussing ways in which *Mythlore's* SWOSU platform could be used to archive presentations for conferences which have been abruptly cancelled; including, if this crisis continues, *Mythcon* itself.

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 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 to his assistant Ben Dressler.

—Janet Brennan Croft