

7th Floor Main Hall Rm. 150

Doors Open 9:30am

10am-1030am

Opening Remarks

The Conference Team

Tolkien Maker of Middle-earth Presentation

Tony Del Aversano Public Programs Associate for the Morgan Library and Museum

1030am-11:15am

"The Bones of the Ox": Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's Sources and Why They Matter

Jason Fisher

Source criticism is the study of how authors construct their works from earlier sources and analogues. All authors have some sources and influences, but those of J.R.R. Tolkien are especially rich and varied. As a result, this aspect of Tolkien scholarship has been a fruitful one for many years, but it has also sometimes gone astray or looked for sources in the wrong places. In this survey lecture, we'll explore some of the major sources behind *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. But discovering Tolkien's sources, while great fun, is only part of the process. We also need to understand why they matter and how they can help us to appreciate Tolkien all the more.

11:30a.m-12:15pm

Teaching Tolkien in Today's University

Roundtable session moderated by Leslie A. Donovan and Megan Abrahamson

Panelists include: Kristine Larsen, Yvette Kisor, Robin Reid and Judy Ford

Academic interest in Tolkien and his works has advanced from the peripheral study of a popular culture phenomenon to a field of substantial academic scholarship, and higher education has used Tolkien-related courses primarily as a means to help students reflect on literary traditions of the medieval past as seen through a modernist lens. Today's university students are more and more likely to have their first encounter with Tolkien—if any—through Jackson's influential films, requiring college-level instructors to adapt diverse strategies in Tolkien studies courses to address the preconceptions and needs of audiences ever more constrained by the demands and strains of the twenty-first century. This roundtable will highlight several multi- and interdisciplinary pedagogical methods to introduce today's college students to Tolkien in STEM fields, Honors courses, and as a part of General Education requirements. This panel discussion features instructors who employ a variety of tools for using Tolkien's works fruitfully to introduce today's college students to such diverse topics as gender, mythology and mythmaking, film studies, medievalism, and popular culture.

12:30pm-1:15pm

Swann's Adaptation of Tolkien's "Errantry"

David Emerson

In 1966, Donald Swann, of the performance team Flanders & Swann, set Tolkien's poem "Errantry" to music, for inclusion in his song Cycle *The Road Goes Ever On*. The poem has a unique meter and rhyme scheme, and Swann's composition reflects that while also interpreting the events of the narrative contained in the poem. This presentation will analyse how Swann's "art song" approach to this music presents an appropriate representation of the poem, through the use of variation,

selected repetition, tonal shifts, and unique effects. To illustrate key passages, piano music will be performed live during the presentation.

1:30pm-2pm
LUNCH BREAK

2pm – 2:45pm

The Road Goes Ever On

Peter Walker and David Alpher

J.R.R. Tolkien's literary works, most notably the epic Lord of the Rings trilogy, have inspired countless readers, filmmakers, and artists. Composer Donald Swann set a series of Tolkien's poems in his song cycle *The Road Goes Ever On*. Tolkien heard all but the final song during a visit with Swann, and in fact suggested the tune used in *Namárië* (Farewell), as an improvement on the setting Swann originally composed. Bass-baritone Peter Walker and pianist David Alpher present a recital of English art song built around *The Road Goes Ever On* and Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*. Both song cycles explore the actual and metaphorical experience of the traveler, in both the bucolic world of the English pastoral school, and J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth.

3pm – 3:45pm

“1757 to the Third Age: The Last of the Mohicans and The Lord of the Rings”

Jared Lobdell

The origins of this piece go back fifty years to the author's 1968 remarks on linking TLOTR to Tolkien's "Red Indians were better: there were bows and arrows (I had and have a wholly unsatisfied desire to shoot well with a bow), and strange languages, and glimpses of an archaic mode of life, and above all, forests in such stories" -- remarks with which Tolkien agreed. (Also to Richard West's "Entrelacement" paper.)

4pm-4:45pm

“Sub-creation: Of Song & Spear”

John DiBartolo

For any who have studied Tolkien's works for any length of time, the “Sub-creative” term and concept is well known. Yet it is less well known that Tolkien actually intended or at least hoped that other hands would enter this “Sub-creative” legacy; as Tolkien himself had stated in a letter, “I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama...”

As this presentation will show: sword & spear! This talk will explore the “Sub-creative” concept, specifically through the example of how Tolkien's legendarium inspired a quest inside a video game, the quest inspired a real world song, and the song inspired a real world spear! Tolkien's ‘sub-creative’ secondary world continues to influence and give birth to primary world creations. The goal of this presentation is to inspire and invoke wonder in those would wield paint, music, drama or the hammer in the primary world.

4:45pm-5pm

Closing Remarks

6th Floor
Two Programming Rooms 170 & 175

Room "170"
10:30a-11:30a

Music in Middle-earth

David Bratman

Elsewhere in this conference we will hear music inspired by Tolkien's works. But what is the music that inspired Tolkien? Music plays a major role in his legendarium, from the Ainur singing the world into existence in *The Silmarillion* to the many songs in *The Lord of the Rings*. What kinds of music was Tolkien imagining when he wrote this? What music that he liked himself might he have wanted to accompany the dramatizations of his stories running in readers' brains? Here we'll explore, with recorded illustrations, some answers to these questions.

Room "175"
10:30a-11:15a

"I am Primarily a Scientific Philologist": Tolkien and the Science/Technology Divide

Kristine Larsen

Scientists frequently debunk misconceptions about scientific topics such as black holes or dinosaurs. However, there are also common misconceptions about the scientific understanding and opinions of literary giants such as Tolkien. In particular, many people have the erroneous opinion that Tolkien was anti-science. While he clearly embraced what we would today call environmentalist viewpoints, Tolkien also appreciated the study of the natural environment for its own sake, as embodied in the Elves and Tom Bombadil. This paper will discuss Tolkien's viewpoints of science as reflected in both his letters and the legendarium, with an eye to differentiating between his appreciation for science (as an endeavor) and technology (as an instrument of power)

Room "170"
1145-1230p

Did Middle Earth Have An Anti-Nuclear Message?

Ryder Miller

As a book concerning adventure and war in Middle-earth, it has been argued that there is an anti-nuclear message in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. This might explain why the book was so successful with the counter-culture. Come to this presentation to listen, agree or disagree

Room "175"
11:30a-12:15p

Beowulf and its Influences on JRR Tolkien's the Lord of the Rings

Kaleena Ma

Understanding why JRR Tolkien was so inspired by *Beowulf* is the first step to comprehending the various similarities that *Lord of the Rings* and *Beowulf* share. Since Tolkien was so inspired by *Beowulf*, exploring in depth all the similar thematic, and linguistic elements that are present between the two great works, *Beowulf* and the *Lord of the Rings* would be a worthwhile endeavor. However, first we must look at who Tolkien was and what life experiences he had that led to his study of ancient languages and literature. Tolkien was one of the most well known British writers of the 20th century. His bestsellers, *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* published in 1937 and the 1950s respectively, captivated a huge audience of readers and have been translated into thousands

of languages around the world. The success of his books propelled him into great fame and popularity. Both books were instant bestsellers and set up a new type of science fiction and fantasy genre that emerged onto the market. These works were a success because they were based on the hero motif and the ever popular romantic belief that no matter what, the good guys always should win. Why was Tolkien so inspired by Beowulf? In what ways do they share similarities? Which imaginative threads bind the two stories and why are they popular in each of their own ways until present day? With creativity and imagination, Tolkien made up his own world based on his inspiration from Beowulf and this presentation will speak about it.

Room "170"

12:45p-1:30p

**Atheists, Agnostics, and Animists, Oh, My!: Secular Readings of J. R. R. Tolkien's
Legendarium**

Robin Reid

This project considers the question of how fans of J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium who are atheists, agnostics, or animists, that is, readers who do not, to varying degrees, profess belief in the Christian God or in any other religion's Supreme Being, make meaning of his work in their lives. Using a mixed methodology approach, I will administer an online free-form survey asking for minimal demographic information and answers to open-ended questions allowing respondents to describe their experiences with religion, if any; their personal history of belief; their reading history and interpretations of Tolkien's work, and their responses to the tendency in popular and academic thought to assume that Tolkien's Christian beliefs must shape reader's interpretation of his work.

Room "175"

12:30p-1:15p

Tolkien Inspired Art

Chris Tuthill

In his paper on Art, Christopher Tuthill first explores the contextual importance of visual art in Tolkien's myth-making. However, after a brief but cogent description of Tolkien's thoughts on the role of the visual arts, Tuthill switches his focus to an interesting look at how different modern artists who visualize Tolkien's work—John Howe, the late Jeff Murray and Ted Nasmith—depict key scenes from Tolkien's legendarium.

LUNCH BREAK 1:30p - 2pm

Room "170"

2p – 2:45p

For He Would Take No Wife: The Unmarried Male In The Lord Of The Rings

Nicholas Birns

This paper will concern the unmarried male in The Lord Of The Rings. There are two basic types of unmarried males in Tolkien: those who save themselves for an aesthetic/moral mission like Bilbo and Frodo, and those who seem wrapped up in their identity as warriors, such as Boromir and, emphatically, Eärnur who on that premise do not participate in heterosexual acts. One type of unmarried male is self-sacrificing and gives up, the other is self-aggrandizing and holds everything in. This contrast has the potential to lead to a typology of queer male characters in Tolkien's world.

Room “175”

2pm – 2:45p

Beyond The Hobbit: J.R.R. Tolkien's Other Works for Children

Janet Brennan Croft

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is best known to the world as the author of the classic fantasies *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In his professional life, he was a superb philologist, a skilled translator, the author of a seminal essay on *Beowulf*, and a contributor to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. But Tolkien was also a father who loved to make up stories for his four children, write them down, and in many cases illustrate them himself. In addition to *The Hobbit*, widely considered a classic of children's literature, he also wrote four shorter works, two published during his lifetime and two posthumously, as well as several poems and a delightful collection of annual illustrated letters from Father Christmas. This presentation will introduce *Roverandom*, *Mr. Bliss*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *Smith of Wootton Major*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, and *Letters From Father Christmas*, and discuss how they relate to his creative process, his family relationships, and his themes as a writer.

Room “170”

3pm-3:45pm

Queer Tolkien

A roundtable discussion with presenters Chris Vaccaro, Robin Reid, Yvette Kisor, Nicholas Birns.

Based on the forthcoming collection edited by Robin Reid, Chris Vaccaro and Stephen Yandell concerning a wide range of topics related to queerness in Tolkien/Middle-earth Studies. Topics include but are not limited to: Otherness, the uncanny, the marginalized and oppressed, liminality, the stranger/outsider, monstrous neighbor, genderqueer, homo-eroticism, homo-amory, homosocial continuum, female queerness, female masculinity, queer fandom, queer publics/counter publics, transgender queerness, queer gaze, queer fandoms, film theory, medievalisms, applying theories by Ahmed, Butler, Doty, Halberstam, Lévinas, Pugh, Žižek, etc.

Room “175”

3p – 3:45p

Big in Japan: Tolkienian Faerie in the Dark Souls Games

Peter Grybauskas

This paper explores the ways in which Tolkien's theories of fantasy, sub-creation, and world-making take new form and find a new audience in the dark fantasy landscapes and gameplay of the hit RPG series, *Dark Souls*. Led by auteur game designer Miyazaki, Japanese studio From Software's brand of fantasy—beginning with the cult-hit *Demon's Souls* and on through three *Dark Souls* games—has become a phenomenon, routinely cited as a turning-point in modern game design. But its triumph is more renaissance than revolution, pushing the genre forward by hearkening back to principles which owe much to Tolkien's work. My examination of the series draws on Tolkien's *legendarium* as well as his theories of Faerie (as propounded in “On Fairy-stories” and in the “Smith of Wootton Major” essay), considering the ways in which they inform the game's bewildering and enchanting approach to world-building and storytelling. It is my hope that inquiries of this sort might help us better understand Tolkien's lasting influence on game design principles and cast new light on the source material as well.

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| Main Hall 7 th Floor Rm 150 | 6 th Floor Rm 170 | 6 th Floor Rm 175 |
| 10am-1030a | | |
| Opening Remarks | | |
| Conference Team & The Morgan Library | | |
| 10:30a-11:15a | 10:30a – 11:30a | 1030a-11:15a |
| Fisher: Exploring Tolkien’s Sources and Why They Matter | Bratman: Music in Middle-earth | Larsen: Tolkien and Science |
| | | |
| 11:30p-12:15p | 11:45p-12:30p | 11:30p-12:15p |
| Teaching Tolkien Panel | Miller: Nuclear Age & LOTR | Ma: Tolkien and Beowulf |
| | | |
| 12:30p-1:15p | 12:45p – 1:30p | 12:30p-1:15p |
| Emerson: Tolkien's “Errantry” | Reid: Secular Readings of J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium | Tuthill: Tolkien Inspired Art |
| LUNCH BREAK | 1:30p - 2p | LUNCH BREAK |
| | | |
| 2p – 2:45p | 2p – 2:45p | 2p – 2:45p |
| Walker: The Road Goes Ever On | Birns: The Unmarried male in the LOTR | Croft: Beyond The Hobbit |
| 3p – 3:45p | 3p – 3:45p | 3p – 3:45p |
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| DiBartolo: Of Song & Spear | | |
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