



# Oxonmoot Online

18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020

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### Activities

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## Keynotes & Events

### 1) **Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales* at 40 (Dimitra Fimi)**

This talk will explore the significance and legacy of *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* on the year of its 40th anniversary, picking up threads that lead us back to Tolkien's better-known mythological and novelistic fantasy writings, but also examining how the book's form and editorial practices informed the entire vision of Tolkien's legendarium as we have it today.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### 2) **Opening Ceremony**

Including an overview of the event, welcome from Tolkien Society Chair Shaun Gunner, and essential information to help you get the best out of Oxonmoot Online.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### 3) **Diversity in Tolkien Scholarship and Fandom (Sultana Raza (moderator), Elyanna Choi, Sarah Westvik)**

Representation matters. The question of Tolkien's complex and often problematic representations of race and ethnicity has been raised by scholars for at least a decade. Moreover, lively fan communities have often responded to such issues with restorative readings and depictions that approach Tolkien's work via a lens of diversity and inclusivity. This panel will present the perspective of fans and scholars of colour in reading and responding to Tolkien's work and within the communities of Tolkien scholarship and fandom. The panel will be briefly introduced by Dr Dimitra Fimi, and will be chaired by Sultana Raza, in dialogue with Elyanna Choi and Sarah Westvik.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### 4) **Quiz (Maggie & Mike Percival)**

Introduced in 2012 as an opening night icebreaker, Maggie and Mike Percival's Oxonmoot Pub Quiz has become something of an institution, which has translated successfully to an online format through the use of Kahoot! The Quiz will cover all aspects of Tolkien knowledge – but the main objective is to have fun!

You'll need a second device (e.g. a phone) to join the Kahoot! game, but full instructions will be provided on the night.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### 5) **New Voices in Tolkien Scholarship (Luke Shelton (moderator), Mariana Rios-Maldonado, Laura Martin-Gomez, Mina Lukic and Taylor Driggers)**

Students and early career scholars around the world are engaging with Tolkien's works and with critical scholarly conversations. This panel hopes to give a platform to some of the remarkable talent that has started to have an impact on the academic community surrounding Tolkien's works. Mariana Rios-Maldonado, Laura Martin-Gomez, and Mina Lukic are each working on doctoral theses about Tolkien and are interested in his works and how fans have responded to them. Taylor Driggers is a recent PhD graduate whose work helps to demonstrate how fantasy can provide a context for examining religious dogma. The panellists

will present brief summaries of their research interests, then have a guided discussion from moderator and attendee questions.

[[Saturday](#)]

## **6) An Evening with Wayne Hammond & Christina Scull (Wayne Hammond, Christina Scull)**

Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull are well known as the authors of *J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator*, *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion*, *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*, *The Art of The Hobbit*, and *The Art of The Lord of the Rings*, and as editors of *Roverandom*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and the expanded *Adventures of Tom Bombadil*.

Celebrating their receipt of the Outstanding Contribution award in the 2020 Tolkien Society Awards, we are delighted to welcome Wayne and Christina for an hour of informal discussion and Q&A.

[[Saturday](#)]

## **7) Dinner**

Fellowship has always been a key theme of Oxonmoot, and a big part of that is our shared meals, especially the Saturday lunch which is the one occasion when we all come together.

So how to recreate that feeling at Oxonmoot Online?

We will all come together in the Meeting space, and begin, in the manner of Faramir at Henneth Annûn, by facing West in our respective locations. We will follow that with the toasts which are traditional at Tolkien Society dinners. And then we will “seat” you at “tables” with your fellow delegates (assign you to Zoom Meeting breakout rooms) to share whatever meal is appropriate to the time of day where you are – or just to meet and chat with other delegates.

So, bring a drink for the toasts, arrange for the food of your choice, and importantly make sure you know which way is West!

[[Saturday](#)]

## **8) Entertainments & Masquerade**

Since the earliest days of Oxonmoot, members have provided entertainment for each other in the form of Songs, Dances and Sketches, and why should Oxonmoot Online be any different? The presentation may be virtual, but we have performers from across the globe waiting to share their talents with you all.

At some point we will also run our Costume Masquerade, providing an opportunity for the costumers amongst us to showcase their talents.

Sit back and enjoy (unless, of course, you are performing)!

[[Saturday](#)]

## **9) The Future of The Tolkien Society (Shaun Gunner)**

Shaun Gunner, Chair of The Tolkien Society, shares his thoughts on the transformation which Covid has brought to the Society and the opportunities for future development, and leads a

discussion where you, the delegates of Oxonmoot Online, whether Tolkien Society members or not, can help to shape that future.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

#### **10) What Does It Mean to Talk about Tolkien and Diversity? A Look within and without the Legendarium (Yvette Kisor)**

“What Does It Mean to Talk about Tolkien and Diversity? A Look within and without the Legendarium” considers racial diversity by focusing on the structure of Tolkien’s universe, both how it is modelled on ancient and medieval concepts like the Great Chain of Being and the Declining Ages of Man, but also remakes those models. In addition, it considers responses to racial structures perceived in Tolkien’s work.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

#### **11) Closing Ceremony**

In which we look back at the last two days, and forward to Oxonmoot 2021.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

#### **12) Enyalië (Remembrance)**

The traditional end of Oxonmoot, and the one event which has featured every year, Enyalië is our time for reflection on the man who has brought us all together – Professor J.R.R. Tolkien. Normally held in Wolvercote Cemetery in Oxford, our virtual version should provide a fitting end to Oxonmoot Online.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

## Talks & Papers

### **101) Wizards, knowledge, strong suspicion, and divine intervention (Murray Smith)**

This talk explores the level of knowledge, or strong suspicion, among people in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth – particularly the Ruling Stewards of Gondor – that the Wizards, notably Saruman and Gandalf, were Maiar. One Steward, due to this, permitted Saruman to become a tenant of Gondor, controlling one of its main fortresses, and one of the Seeing-stones. He, many years later, tore up his tenancy agreement, becoming the most privileged squatter in Middle-earth.

Such a suspicion may have had implications for the attitudes of later Stewards, in particular Denethor II, towards the White Council and its members, due to its later failures.

Gandalf's related return from the dead, due to divine intervention, revealing his identity to so many, is something I don't believe has been properly looked at, in terms of increasing Denethor's existing hostility towards the former, seen in Book 5 of *The Lord of the Rings*.

[[Friday](#)]

### **102) The importance of music and its different functions in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien (Martha Celis-Mendoza)**

The relevance of music and song in the novels and many of the other works of J.R.R. Tolkien goes beyond the representation of an element that characterizes the culture and societies of Middle Earth and of the world he sub-created. It is rather the source of Creation in the Tolkienian universe, as well as the catalyst of action, in points of narrative conflict, that allows for the development of the plot. Many characters make use of songs to communicate with the beloved or to summon the hosts for battle, and they can even be used as weapons to defeat the enemy. While they contribute to characterizing the different peoples in Tolkien's Imaginarium, they also constitute an essential element in accompanying the hero through the different cycles of his evolution. Furthermore, the Music of the Ainur in *The Silmarillion* may well be acknowledged as a narrative representation of the Philosophy of sub-creation that underlies all of Tolkien's work.

[[Friday](#)]

### **103) The Call of the Spiders: A Feminist Reading of J.R.R. Tolkien's Ungoliant and Shelob (María Fernanda Chávez Guíñez)**

When analyzing J.R.R. Tolkien's works from gender studies, it is fundamental to focus on how women are represented, especially those characters regarded as marginal. This work aims to present a feminist reading of Ungoliant and Shelob. These spiders do not only provide a bond between *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but additionally they embody qualities that are relevant for understanding the conception of female identity. It is necessary to study them not as dependent counterparts of the other female characters, nor as devices that function as allies of Melkor and Sauron, but rather as independent creatures. To develop this aim, feminist theory is applied for analyzing Ungoliant and Shelob: their characterization and evolution through their respective novels. It is possible to evidence that these spiders make a call for cooperation between genders.

[[Friday](#)]

#### **104) Leadership in Tolkien's Middle-earth (Michael Urick)**

Leadership theories have been discussed frequently by both academics and practitioners. This paper examines leadership theories using the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Some theories that will be discussed include: servant leadership, transformational leadership, bases of power, leader-member exchange, and discursive leadership. Examples of both positive and negative leaders will be provided through Tolkien's characters including (but not limited to) Aragorn, Gandalf, Bilbo, Frodo, Saruman, and Thorin. The purpose of the paper is to analyze leadership theories through the lens of Tolkien's works so that they can be better understood regarding their usefulness to a variety of contexts. From this, readers can perhaps self-reflect and find ways in which the theories might apply to their own lives and situations.

[\[Friday\]](#)

#### **105) Bilbo, the Existentialist Hero (Ian Barnstead)**

Using the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, among other 20th century philosophers, my paper will present a reflection of Bilbo's journey in *The Hobbit* as an existentialist development of character. Marcel critiques the world as lacking reflection on transcendence and viewing each person as a mere functionality. He also highlights an interior need to know one's place in the cosmos. Bilbo's journey is one of finding an authentic existence, through balancing the tensions between the Tookish and Baggins parts of his personality, and events in his journey highlight the danger of viewing the Other as merely functional. In the end, Bilbo is the hero because he finds his authentic self and knows the truth about his place in the cosmos.

[\[Friday\]](#)

#### **106) Middle-earth in Paris: the BnF exhibition of 2019-2020 (Marie Bretagnolle)**

From October 2019 to February 2020, the French National Library (BnF) held a once-in-a-lifetime exhibition in the heart of Paris: "Tolkien: Voyage en Terre du Milieu" ("Tolkien: a journey in Middle-earth"). When it closed, it was the most successful event of the history of the Library, bringing 135,068 visitors together for a walk across Middle-earth and beyond. This talk offers to take a look at its creation and how it found its place in one of the shrines of French culture. "Tolkien: Voyage en Terre du Milieu" is not the French version of the Bodleian and Morgan Libraries exhibition – part of this presentation will explain how the Parisian display expanded the previous Oxford and New York versions, bringing in artworks and artefacts from French museums to create a dialogue with Tolkien's manuscripts, drawings and illustrations. Taking root in these specificities, an overview of the catalogue will show it is the perfect complement to the "Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth" book.

[\[Saturday\]](#)

#### **107) Rock'n'troll: Tolkien's works in the music of the 1960s and 1970s (Theo Maligeay)**

My work contends that the surge in popularity of Tolkien's works starting from 1965 was stimulated by the rise of the counter-culture, as Middle-earth became part and parcel of the counter-cultural imaginary. Tolkien indeed emerged as what Bruce Beatie calls a "phenomenon" at the end of the Sixties: numerous bands from the Beatles to Rush and Led Zeppelin were inspired by their reading of Tolkien's masterpieces and this influence was also visible in the iconography of rock through the album covers designed by Roger Dean and David Fairbrother-Roe. However, there are also elements in the counter-culture and Tolkien's life and works which clash irreconcilably. Thus, my work presents not only a thorough catalog

of the traces of Middle-earth found in the music of the counter-culture, but also draws on the figures of William Morris and reader-response theory to shed light on the winding pathways and connections between the tales we love and the musical revolutions of the 1960s.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **108) Professors at play - Some early reviews of *The Hobbit* (Alan Reynolds)**

I collect Tolkien; and sometimes at Oxonmoot I like to examine some of the items I've picked up over the years. Today I'd like to make a "show and tell" presentation of the year's run of *The Horn Book* (1938), which includes adverts for, and articles about, the first US printing of *The Hobbit*.

I will be supplementing this with photocopies of CS Lewis's two reviews of *The Hobbit*, one published in *The Times*, the other in the *Times Literary Supplement*. I take my title from the review page in *The Times* of 6th December 1937; one which drew a typically 'Tolkien' response from JRR in a letter to his publishers.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **109) The Semitic connection - Near Eastern Influences on Tolkien's invented languages (Maria Zielenbach)**

It is well known that several of Tolkien's invented languages, especially the Dwarven language Khuzdul and Adûnaic, the language of Númenor, resemble languages of the Semitic language family. We also know that Tolkien probably had at least some expertise in Hebrew and Akkadian. In this talk I want to present the "state of art" of what we know about Tolkien's "Semitic connection".

More specifically I will talk about the following questions:

- What are the Semitic languages and what do we know about Khuzdul and the Mannish languages?
- What was Tolkien's connection to Semitic languages, which of them did he study and did he acquire proficiency in any of them? In what way do Khuzdul, Adûnaic and related languages resemble Semitic ones?

I hope my talk will be interesting for both linguists and non-linguists.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **110) Language re-imagined in Middle Earth and Hundred-Acre Wood (Jennifer Brooker)**

Jokes, rhymes, and riddles in works of J.R.R. Tolkien and A.A. Milne. Two best-selling English authors, whose lives sometimes ran in parallel, but whose literary output could hardly be more different – and yet...

[[Saturday](#)]

### **111) Tolkienography (Jay Johnstone)**

An interpersonal interpretation of the works of Tolkien through dream and contemplation, the fear of the creative process and finding your voice.

[[Saturday](#)]

**112) “It Mourns for Beleg Even As You Do:” ‘Living’ Swords in J.R.R. Tolkien’s Legendarium (Birgitte BreemerKamp)**

Swords played an important role in early medieval society, and sword-carrying warriors were held in higher esteem than warriors carrying spears. The intimate and intense method of killing that swords require also explains the unique bond between swords and their wielders, which may “hint at an idea of autonomous swords, which perhaps existed in certain corners of some early medieval minds” (Brunner, *The Sword*, p. 123-124). This concept, termed “living swords”, pertains to the idea that “[s]words may, on occasion, have been viewed as “living” beings” (Brunner, p. 12). This concept is particularly frequent in medieval epic poetry and is also encountered in J.R.R. Tolkien’s legendarium. In my paper, I shall discuss some swords which have not yet been studied, the swords of Westensesse in *The Lord of the Rings* and Archangel/Gurthang in *The Children of Húrin*, and shall analyse their connection with the concept of “living” swords through six “topoi” in medieval literature.

[[Saturday](#)]

**113) A new lens: discovering Tolkien's tertiary world & the reality of his work (Robert Viscusi)**

The paper proposes a new lens to approach understanding the import & intent of Tolkien's references outside of allegory or literalism. It proposes a stronger insight into the vector of his Mythology. Here we present a new mode of reading the Legendarium & its contents, including those elements which are very often read as allegorical and presents an entirely new prism with which to digest their meaning. In the paper we outline the that the primary world sources for Tolkien's secondary world actually indicate a tertiary world of which the secondary world is a prism.

[[Saturday](#)]

**114) The Ring of Power and The Deception of Simile (Sara Brown)**

Tolkien's Ring of Power resonates throughout *The Lord of the Rings*; indeed, its presence is felt even when it is not explicitly “on stage”. Tolkien presents the Ring as cunning and manipulative, luring its victims both with the false promises of power and the sheen of its golden beauty. It should come as no surprise, then, to discover that Tolkien was equally crafty in his depiction of this most deceptive of objects. This paper aims to show how, by carefully referring to it through description that conceals more than it clarifies, and employing at all times the disguise of simile, Tolkien ensures that the Ring is an object of seeming as much to the reader as it is to those it seeks to ensnare within the narrative.

[[Saturday](#)]

**115) Númenórean Arts and Crafts V, Númenórean Philately: What a Doodle Might Reveal of Tolkien’s Genius (Denis Bridoux)**

As part of my systematic research on Tolkien’s art, I am currently studying his doodles and other late art, using his own medium, coloured ball-points, and discovering a wealth of unexpected information. I am also using his own medium to reproduce his pieces, which enables me to repeat his own drawing gestures. The one we explore was drawn on an envelope. What can we learn from studying it? Expect some surprises.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **116) Llanbedrog 1920 (Ian Spittlehouse)**

In the summer of 1920 John Ronald, Edith and their son, John, visited Llanbedrog in North Wales. This holiday followed Tolkien's successful appointment as Reader in English Language at the University of Leeds. In *J.R.R. Tolkien: Companion and Guide: Chronology* edited by Hammond and Scull, this episode is recorded as a holiday where the family stayed in, "a cottage in [now corrected to 'near'] Trwyn Llanbedrog". One hundred years on and the Llŷn Peninsular is as popular as ever with holidaymakers, but what might have drawn Tolkien to this location? Tolkien sketched many coastal scenes and Hammond and Scull's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator* and *Chronology* refer to unpublished, "...views of the Welsh coast". This paper is an investigation into those references connecting Tolkien with Wales and to Llanbedrog in particular. It goes on to present an argument concerning the subjects in two other sketches that the author thinks might be earlier attempts at recording the same coastline.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **117) Tolkien Art Show (Len Sanford)**

An Oxonmoot Institution. Former Archivist and editor of *Mallorn* Len Sanford shares a sample of the 3,000 pieces of Tolkien artwork he has collected over the years – some serious, some less so. Audience participation via the chat function will be essential!

[[Saturday](#)]

### **118) Doctor Tolkien's Life-long Moon Phase Bad (with apologies to The Beatles) (Kristine Larsen)**

I come to commiserate with the Good Professor, not to condemn his astronomy. Indeed, his fascination with and demonstrated difficulty in keeping straight (even with a 1941-2 calendar) the lunar cycle of phases align him with the majority of humanity. While the lunar problems with *The Hobbit* (and Tolkien's failed attempts to rectify the situation) are well documented, similar misconceptions and slip-ups go all the way back to *The Book of Lost Tales*. Rather than an exhaustive blooper reel of bad moons rising (and setting), my intention is instead to celebrate the apparently consistent nature of a handful of his most stubborn misconceptions for the purpose of humanizing rather than humiliating the Oxford don.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **119) On Increasing Tolkien Popularity in Times of Change and Upheaval (Kate Grindstaff)**

This paper dives into the question of when and how Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* gained popularity and increased readership, which helps to predict when it will rise again. Four periods of time in the last century stand out as such key moments: 1914-1918, 1965, 2000-2002, and present day. Major technological, cultural, and academic changes took place at these times, first in Britain and then in America. These changes, along with the engaging style, striking imagery, and profound themes of *The Lord of the Rings*, spurred the classic story to increased popularity. Violence and war were also common factors connecting these moments. By studying the changes of these moments in relation to the themes of *The Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien's personal experience in WWI, predictions can be made regarding the future impact of the tale. The continuing and increasing impact of *The Lord of the Rings* proves that Tolkien's resonating themes and ground-breaking fantasy have the power to stand the test of time.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **120) Tolkien's Hidden Realms (Chad High)**

J.R.R. Tolkien had a fascination with hidden kingdoms and cities. As one reads through his works they can be seen everywhere, throughout the ages and in a variety of forms. These hidden realms have many things in common, and all have their own symbolism; many are bastions of hope against an ever present dark foe, others are places that are ignorant of any darkness and simply exist in bliss and wonder and are overlooked. Some are tucked away in a valley or at the base of a mountain range; while others are deep in dense and impenetrable forests either with natural or supernatural defenses. Some are carved straight out of the stone or delved deep into the earth, and others... well a few even existed right out in the open. Join Chad High as he gives a talk on his recently published paper on Tolkien and the realms of Middle-earth.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **121) One Book at a Time (Patty Howerton)**

I am planning to write a paper regarding my adventure with *The Lord of the Rings* and how I, as a dedicated Tolkien fan, was able, during the years 2003 and 2007, to buy and donate over 2,500 copies of *The Lord of the Rings* to schools in the states of Idaho and Montana in the USA. Those books went to school libraries, community libraries, English classes, Reading classes, and to individual students who wrote winning essays. I started the Skies of Rohan Smial – the Idaho and Montana Tolkien Society, in 2002 and used it as a base for spreading Tolkien information and requests for books. In 2003 The Tolkien Society named Skies of Rohan the Smial of the Year during the Eleventy-One Oxonmoot for outstanding work in promoting J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* in the realm of education. My story will describe how just one determined person can spread the works of Tolkien.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **122) "More than Meets the Eye": The Significance of the Edifice in *The Lord of the Rings* (Michaela Schneider-Wettstein)**

The landscape in *The Lord of the Rings* is altered significantly by the presence of edifices throughout Middle-earth. According to John Clute's definition, edifices and their inhabitants are reciprocally tied to each other. Hence, edifices contribute tremendously to the identity of the peoples of Middle-earth and are therefore a fundamental part of the world. Moreover, Tolkien's edifices merge with their natural surroundings in a way that it is impossible to separate them from the land and the people. Finally, the edifice itself is inextricably tied to Burke's sublime and Tolkien's Faërie and is thus one of the constituting elements of enchantment. This paper aims to discuss how habitations are incorporated into their natural surroundings as edifices with an emphasis on the identity making of their inhabitants. Among the selected examples will be the Great Smials, Khazad-dûm, and Minas Tirith. Additionally, the definition of the edifice will be challenged by considering Lothlórien in the analysis. Finally, the selected examples will be discussed in the context of the sublime and the Faërie as constituting elements of the enchantment.

[[Sunday](#)]

### **123) Destroying the state from within – the role of advisors in Tolkien's world (Enrico Spadaro)**

In Tolkien's *Legendarium*, when it comes to politics, helpers seem to turn into political advisors and lead their respective kings to ill-fated decisions and eventually to the destruction of their

reigns. Many are the motifs behind this bad and poor counselling, ranging from love, pride, tragic doom, thirst of war and expansion to wielding definitive power in a subtle way. This paper focuses on those characters who play the role of advisors and counsellors – either intentionally or unintentionally – and are then the major cause of the fall of their kingdoms. Four cases will be analyzed: Túrin in Nargothrond; Maeglin in Gondolin; Sauron in Númenor, who is the subtlest political advisor incarnating a Machiavellian figure; and Grima Wormtongue. Why did Tolkien show such negative examples? Is he suggesting something against the dark side of modern corruption? Or against Machiavellian ideas? Is this a criticism to those who “write it [government] with a capital G” (letter no. 52)?

[[Sunday](#)]

#### **124) Gandalf: from Bladorthin to Olorin (Madawc Williams)**

In this paper I will discuss how Tolkien's vision of the character we know as Gandalf constantly changed. Well into the writing of *Lord of the Rings*, he was probably still just a powerful human, or one of the later generations of angelic spirits. That he was an angel and that all of them existed before the world was made was a final concept. Older ideas were not entirely edited out.

[[Sunday](#)]

#### **125) In Slothful Gardens? (Paul Corfield Godfrey)**

In *The Lord of the Rings* the dichotomy between good and evil is often blurred and rarely defined; in *The Silmarillion* the primal legends bring out the distinction sharply. This means that my musical setting must reflect that distinction by all means – thematic, harmonic, vocal, orchestral. Employing extracts from the recordings currently being released, I demonstrate how this can be achieved – for example how the Morgoth whose initial utterances echo his desire for parity and supremacy over his brother Manwë, could become the figure whose lust for Lúthien can generate the song of regret In Slothful Gardens.

[[Sunday](#)]

#### **126) A Commentary on Tolkien's lecture “Dragons” (Constantin Pirozhkov)**

On 1 January 1938 Tolkien gave a lecture on dragons for children in the University Museum, Oxford. W. Hammond and C. Scull suppose it was probably due to the publication of *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics* (July 1937) and *The Hobbit* (September 1937). The lecture was published for the first time in *The Hobbit* facsimile edition booklet in 2018 without any comments except establishing its worth and a short retelling. There are some comments on the author's thoughts on Dragons in *The History of The Hobbit* by John D. Rateliff and W. Hammond and C. Scull *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* but the text as far as I know is still left unannotated. In my study I will try to fill the gap. It's time to discuss what “My friend, Mr Baggins, used to say”, as stated in Tolkien's Lecture.

[[Sunday](#)]

#### **127) Ethics, Femininity and the Other in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth Narratives (Mariana Rios Maldonado)**

My paper will showcase the possible linkages between J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth narratives – *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, Emmanuel Levinas' ethical philosophy, gender and representations of the Other. According to Levinas, the cornerstone of human experience and ethics is our encounter with others. Hence, my paper

will focus on how the feminine characters in Tolkien's Middle-earth narratives shape their ethos through their encounters with the Other in relation to four prevalent themes throughout Tolkien's literary production: heroism, evil, death and free will. "Feminine" is construed here as a wide-ranging concept that enables the re-examination of Tolkienian characters beyond binary male/female gender paradigms. At the same time, this presentation will seek to highlight the multiple incarnations of otherness and difference that characterize Middle-earth as a fictional world and impact its overarching moral structure.

[Sunday]

**128) Foraging for Sources: *Sir Orfeo* as the Origin of Medieval Romance Topoi Present in Mirkwood (Andoni Cossio)**

In view of Jason Fisher's (2011) principles for a rigorous study of J.R.R. Tolkien's sources, this paper aims to demonstrate that the relationship between *Sir Orfeo* (c.1330) and *The Hobbit* (1937) is of influence and not of mere similarity. Firstly, by showing that 21 years (1915-1936) of devotion passed since Tolkien encountered *Sir Orfeo* in Oxford, till the finished typescript of *The Hobbit* was sent to Allen & Unwin. Secondly, by taking other scholars' studies further (Shippey, Anderson, Honegger, Rateliff, Wickham-Crowley, and Hillman) and unravelling how the themes of abduction and otherworld, as taken from *Sir Orfeo*, are incorporated into Mirkwood.

[Sunday]

**129) Authoritative Poetry: A structural description of Authority in *The Lord of the Rings* with the Weber Triadic Authority Model (Zvetelina Nestorov)**

The poetry paratext in *The Fellowship of the Ring* establishes the main authorities of Middle-earth before the narration even begins. It references three different types of authority that can be traced and elaborated with Weber's model of authority. The model provides a structure that distinguishes between traditional, divine and charismatic authority fitting the general authority structures in the books. The poem of the One Ring is the most prominent verse text in the trilogy; it occurs on multiple occasions with the function of establishing authority and provides a reference to significant events from the past. Those events, in turn, explain the authority structure in the status quo and introduce the authority distribution amongst the races. The poems are not just aesthetic features of the books. Arguably, characters 'deliberately' use singing and reciting poems to claim authority, to justify an action or to generally elevate their authoritative status.

[Sunday]

**130) Alan Lee's Cover Art & his exploration of Tolkien's "new" works (Sultana Raza)**

This paper will delve into Alan Lee's illustrations of *The Fall of Gondolin* in terms of story progression, interactions between characters, and the landscape, and clues about future events. It will examine pictorial and thematic inter-lacings not just in *The Fall of Gondolin*, but also between Alan Lee's other works for "new" Tolkien books, such as *Beren and Luthien*, and *The Children of Húrin*. For example, the front and back covers of these books will be compared to see what first overall impression Alan Lee attempts to give of these stories, with regards to main characters, nuanced colour palette, and the backdrop. Cover art is crucial, as most people do judge a book by its cover, and it gives the overall first impression of the story. Time permitting, I could include some of Alan Lee's relevant works from John Garth's *Tolkien's Worlds*.

[Sunday]

**131) Archetypes in Tolkien's work: a (very) preliminary approach from Jung's psychological functions (Julieta Elizaga)**

In this presentation I explore the development of characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* from the theory of the Hero's Journey, by Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung's psychological types. In a very preliminary way, I propose that, since the work has a very mythical content, it is possible to relate the characters, and especially their development, to psychological functions and the process of individuation. With this, I do not intend to present a very academic content, on the contrary, I would like to invite the audience to engage with this proposal, finding (maybe) some resonance with the process of personal growth. I will focus on the character of Bilbo Baggins's journey, identifying elements of the Hero's journey, and relating them to the process of individuation from the development of the psychological functions of sensing and intuition.

[[Sunday](#)]

**132) Ecological Memory in *The Lord of the Rings* (Kenton Sena)**

Ecosystems in the primary world exhibit strong "memory" of past interactions, for good or for ill. Some ecosystems affected by highly destructive industrial practices can be so crippled that they remain hazardous to living things long into the future. Tolkien's ecosystems demonstrate this same sort of memory, benefiting from ages of care or still devastated by even one highly destructive event. This paper begins with the concept of ecological memory in the primary world, then investigates this idea in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (with focus on negative spaces such as the Old Forest, the Brown Lands, and the Dead Marshes, as well as positive spaces such as The Shire, Hollin, and Ithilien). Tolkien's treatment of ecological memory is both a warning and a hope: spaces that are poorly treated can be permanently affected by that ill treatment, but spaces that are cared for can flourish under that care long into the future, nourishing and sustaining generations to come.

[[Sunday](#)]

**133) Panel: Maybe Exhausting, but Not At All Depressing: Spanning Levels, Countries, and Approaches to Teach Tolkien (Leslie Donovan (moderator), Bob Blackham, Dimitra Fimi, Martha Celis-Mendoza and Marilyn R. Pukkila)**

This panel will explore a wide range of experiences of teaching Tolkien, and teaching using Tolkien. Based on their personal experiences from the UK, the US and Mexico, the topics will cover "Teaching Children about Tolkien: Starting with *The Hobbit*", "Teaching Tolkien's Mythmaking", "Teaching Fantasy and the Fantastic through Tolkien", "Teaching Translation through Tolkien" and "Things other than themselves, strange and free': Teaching Tolkien and The Other" – but where the discussion will take them, who can tell??

[[Sunday](#)]

## Activities

### **201) 206) First Timers' Gathering**

New to Tolkien Society events? Or returning and looking to welcome new friends? Everyone is welcome to join the Chair of the Tolkien Society and the Co-Chairs of Oxonmoot as we share a reflection on what the Society means to us, and give you an opportunity to meet one another and “old hands” alike.

[\[Friday\]](#) [\[Saturday\]](#)

### **202) Telerin Circle (Denis Bridoux)**

The Telerin Circle is one of the longest running recurring events at Oxonmoot. Hosted by Denis Bridoux, it provides an opportunity for members to read aloud their favourite passages from Tolkien’s works – or just to listen to others, and perhaps discover something they had never encountered before. The Circle is a reflective event – we don’t invite comments on people’s choice of reading, though we do ask readers to explain briefly why they have chosen the specific passage. Bring your favourite passage (maximum 5 minutes reading time please) ready to read – no need to register in advance.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### **203) Fëanor's Workshop: Papercraft (Zhie)**

Inspired by the numerous times Tolkien used extra paper he found, be it the back of an exam booklet or the Sunday paper. Craft a variety of family-friendly options which all tie back to one of Tolkien’s tales, from a Smaug puppet to stamps to send on your letters to Father Christmas.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### **204) Side by Side with a Friend: Friendship & Togetherness in Tolkien's Writing (Chad High)**

The Friends of Mr. Underhill, Houston Texas Tolkien Society Smial, present to you a discussion on friendship and togetherness in Tolkien's writing. One of the most prominent themes running through Tolkien’s stories is friendship. While the most famous of these friendships is that between Frodo and Sam, it is still only one of many, with other examples including Maedhros and Fingon, Merry and Pippin, Bilbo and Gandalf, Túrin and Beleg, Beren and Finrod, Barahir and his group of outlaws, and Legolas and Gimli – that last being even more remarkable for the base of enmity from which it started. We encourage you to come and spend some time with our group and friends and bring your favorite passages about this topic to read and talk about.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### **205) So you want to write Fanfiction? Writers' Roundtable (Zhie)**

This roundtable discussion of fanfiction authors will include reading of excerpts, discussions based on why the participants write fanfiction, their methods, and Q&A with the audience.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### **207) Who am I? A Riddle Game (Sultana Raza)**

You don't have to get lost in an underground cave, or meet the dreaded Gollum to play this game. These riddles are a lot easier than that. Listen to 2 quatrains. Then decide who these lines are about, and who may have said them. Find out if you're one of the fastest, or the most accurate player around. The most important qualification you'll need is the ability to have fun!

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **208) Mormegil, the Black Sword of Doom (The Greek Tolkien Society)**

The Greek Tolkien Society - The Prancing Pony proudly presents a video of the performance "Mormegil, the Black Sword of Doom", which took place in October 2015 during the 1st Athens Fantasy Festival "FantastiCon 2015". It is a small play based on the book *Narn i Hin Húrin*, adapted and performed solely by members of our Society. The tragic story of Túrin Turambar has been an ongoing project for us, as it reminds us clearly of ancient greek tragedy. Some of you may remember an earlier version that we presented during "Tolkien 2005" in Birmingham, in which we compared Turin to Oedipus.

The first part of the play is mainly a short-version narration of the story of Túrin, albeit enriched with pictures and music, so if anyone wants to skip, the action starts at 08.02. And please stay till the end to add your cheers to that of the other viewers. We hope you enjoy our effort!

In Greek with English Subtitles.

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **209) 213) 225) 228) Fëanor's Workshop: Share, Create and Play (Anne Gooding)**

While we don't have the resources of the Art and Craft room this year, we can use what we have at home.

What projects have you got going – or intended to start – but struggle to find time for? This weekend you can use this workshop to work on these projects while talking to like-minded people – the best of both worlds.

Need a challenge or want a project? Join in and we'll get you started on one! Using what you have at home (Lego included) come and build, create or draw either Bag End or the Hall of Edoras (think of a Viking long hall as a starting point). There should also be some things in the online pack – partly depending on what I can find before the weekend.

What will I be doing? Probably some medieval style embroidery (which desperately needs working on). Or maybe researching things for a Hobbit's Larder; or talking/thinking about the different time periods represented in the cultures of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*; or braiding; or...

Come and find out. Come and give me something new to explore. Come and make friends.

This is a drop in for as long as you like. There is no expectation you will be there for all the time - unless you want to be.

[\[Saturday\]](#) [\[Sunday\]](#)

### **210) 216) Cooking with Beorn's (secret) wife (Maggie Bailey)**

I will demonstrate making Beorn's Honey Cake live from mine and Beorn's kitchen! It is simple to make in less than 30 minutes. Guests can rejoin the workshop when I remove the cake from the oven and check it is cooked (after around 1hour 30 minutes), and again when I remove the cake from the tin after it has cooled (takes about an hour) and do the honey glaze. Guests can cook their own cake whilst watching me, or just sit back and watch.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **211) Many Meetings: Tolkien Societies as hubs for International Youth Events (Lithuanian Tolkien Society)**

The Lithuanian Tolkien society, Tolkien Lietuva, kindly invites you to join an informal discussion and experience-sharing event regarding international events, such as youth exchanges. We have had remarkably great experiences hosting two such events and participating in one, together with the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian Tolkien societies (or similar organizations). A shared love for the Professor's works brought us together and provided a foundation to build quite large and complex events upon, and we believe this concept might work for others as well. Do you have similar experiences? Are you interested in trying to host a similar event or looking for partners? Are you simply interested in hearing stories about how such projects develop? Join in and discuss!

[[Saturday](#)]

### **212) Dungeons, Dragons & Denethor (A D&D Workshop) (Joel Cornah)**

The tabletop Role Playing Game, Dungeons and Dragons, is enjoying something of a renaissance, and the game owes an awful lot to the works of the Professor. This workshop will be designed to introduce you to the game, discuss its origins and connections with Tolkien, as well as helping you build a character, story, or quest of your own. Led by experienced Dungeon Masters and players, we will take Tolkien inspired scenarios and see how you would handle them - from Beleriand to Faerie Land.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **214) 230) U. MOve! Slaying Darkness through Dance (Maureen Layden)**

Brought to you by Uinen and the Blue Wizards...

Join us to dance rhythms from around the world, celebrate hope, and bring light to the dark spaces! No experience needed, all fitness levels welcome! We'll end with a nice stretch before having a good cup of ale... er... or tea!

"Dance all ye Joyful! Now Dance Altogether!"

[[Saturday](#)] [[Sunday](#)]

### **215) So you want to write Fanfiction? Drabbles & Short Works Workshop (Zhie)**

Fanfiction is not required to be an epic, multi-chapters work. This workshop will focus on the writing of short works. Participants will create drabbles and try different short term writing exercises.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **217) Fantasies of Time and Death (Anna Vaninskaya)**

Tolkien famously (and frequently) insisted that *The Lord of the Rings* was “about Death”. Do you agree? And is this observation true of fantasy more generally? Is it a genre uniquely concerned with death and the passage of time?

To share your views and find out what others think, come along to a group discussion led by Anna Vaninskaya, the author of a new book about *Fantasies of Time and Death: Dunsany, Eddison, Tolkien*.

Please bring with you one example to share with the group: a poignant passage from Tolkien or any other writer, a favourite illustration or piece of music that shows why fantasy – like “life”, in the words of C. S. Lewis – might owe “all its sweets to that same death whence rise all its bitters”.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **218) Poetry Reading (María Fernanda Chávez Guíñez)**

A first for Oxonmoot. Join us to hear works by the poets amongst our delegates, while others will read their favourite poems by Tolkien and his associates. Follow the poems in the Oxonmoot Online Anthology, which will be made available to our delegates shortly before the event begins.

[[Saturday](#)]

### **219) How archaeology influenced J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium (Aaron Theis)**

A planning session for a book that has been mulling around in my mind, trapped for the last 19 years by a series of traumatic brain injuries that left me crippled. The book will look at how archaeology influenced and informed J.R.R. Tolkien's Legendarium. Things are in a very rough form, as I literally came back “online” on the 1st of July 2020.

I thought it would be prudent to have a discussion of the ideas that I have and hear from those who may endeavor to read a book on this subject. Some of my early ideas are:

- Professor Tolkien's work at Lydney Park & interaction with Sir Mortimer Wheeler and Tessa Verney Wheeler.
- Back issues of newspapers Professor Tolkien was known to have read.
- Books used by Professor Tolkien in his academic research that have a strong correlation.
- A history of the development of the field of archaeology.
- Examination of the field of History and Historiography and the relation to the development of the legendarium (or does not).
- Maps

[[Saturday](#)]

### **220) Fëanor's Workshop: Crafting with Paper Circuits & LEDs (Zhie)**

Light is a recurring theme in Tolkien's Middle-earth, and paper circuits lend well to crafting light-up cards and other art. Learn the techniques for creating a basic circuit and two different types of switches.

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **221) So you want to write Fanfiction? Character Development Workshop (Zhie)**

This workshop will focus on character development specific to writing in Tolkien's Middle-earth, but contains tips which can be utilized in other fictional writing as well. Participants will develop an original character and participate in activities that allow them to consider the writing of canon characters from the *Legendarium*.

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **222) Fëanor's workshop: Tolkien's Writing Systems (Michael Everson)**

With Fëanor sadly indisposed in the Halls of Mandos, we have engaged Michael Everson to stand in for him in this "Ask Me Anything" workshop on all things to do with Tolkien's Writing Systems – whether that be Runes, Cirth or Tengwar. Bring your script related questions (and your pens and paper) - your participation will determine what our focus will be!

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **223) The Tolkien Name Chain Game (Sultana Raza)**

Do you have an oliphaunt's long memory, or Gandalf's strategic mind? Have you travelled far and wide in Middle-earth like Strider, or don't mind tumbling into new adventures like Pippin? How familiar are you with characters from Middle-earth, and the Undying Lands? Have loads of fun trying to guess their names. You'll get four clues to help you along. Find out if you're as fast as Legolas when it come to hitting a bull's eye, or as accurate as Elrond. The most important element of this game is fun!

[\[Sunday\]](#)

### **224) The Expanding Fandom - Tolkien Through a Multicultural Lens (Sultana Raza)**

Due to globalization SFF fandom has spilled over into other continents. We'll discuss how fans from beyond Europe find refractions of their own culture in Tolkien's writings, and/or how these writings inspire them to come up with new interpretations/readings. Since I'm from India, I'd like to talk about a few uncanny parallels between the life of Noor Jahan 1577–1645 (a Mughal empress), and her niece, Mumtaz Mahal 1593–1631 (for whom the Taj Mahal was built), and the stories of Galadriel and Arwen. Topics for discussion could include historical characters, or objects, archetypes, or philosophies from other myths/cultures. Also, the influence of other languages on Elvish, or A.R. Rahman's music for the *Lord of the Rings* musical, or the influence of the Middle East on medieval Europe, etc.

Do you have any ideas/thoughts to share about viewing various aspects of Tolkien's writings, and the derivative films through a different cultural lens? Please feel free to join us for an informal conversation.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

### **226) Introduction to the Tolkien Society Archive (Pat Reynolds)**

Just what *is* in the Tolkien Society's Archives? How can you use the catalogue? How can you contribute to research - and how can the archives contribute to your research? What should be in the archives - and how you can help make that happen? Pat Reynolds, the society's

volunteer archivist (cum librarian cum social history curator) takes a tour through the online catalogue of the Tolkien Society's archives - from the many translations to some unexpected items.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

**227) Echoes from Middle-earth: A musical voyage through *The Lord of the Rings* (Glindar)**

In our show Bogdan and I are going to lead you to a fascinating journey through *The Lord of the Rings*. I am going to recall the main events and characters of Tolkien's masterpiece by performing some songs from my recent album *Echoes from Middle-Earth*, while Bogdan is going to produce original artworks extempore inspired by my music. You'll be invited to sing along during the concert and I'm sure we'll have lots of fun!

[\[Sunday\]](#)

**229) Costume Masquerade Show-and-Tell (Catherine Thorn)**

Costumers love learning from one another - and just because our Masquerade is an online video presentation doesn't mean we shouldn't provide an opportunity for people to share at Oxonmoot Online too. Masquerade participants and anyone interested in costume are invited to come together with the Masquerade team to discuss their experiences in making their costumes, and share the tricks and tips they used.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

**231) Middle-earth in the Age of Quarantine (Zhie)**

There are several licensed Tolkien games online, and a few fan created games as well which serve as excellent distractions in a socially distanced stay-at-home world. Participants will be treated to tutorials of Lord of the Rings Online, Cards Against Arda, and online emulators for games from the past with commentary about these games.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

**232) Epic Style: Learn to Write and Distinguish Germanic and Celtic Narrative Techniques (Robert Viscusi)**

Tolkien's Legendarium is built out of a dialog of his observing epic literature, principally Germanic & Celtic poetry & folktales. Developing a general understanding of the stylistic motifs of these two individual traditions is an important skill in being able to read & more deeply comprehend Tolkien's work.

In the activity presented participants will be given a brief overview of distinct literary and narrative forms used in Celtic & Germanic literature. The participants will then use these epic literary devices to construct a tale of a mundane daily activity & share them with the group. Bring writing implements with you.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

## Programmed Social Rooms

NOTE: These are the pre-planned Social Rooms built in to the event schedule. At any point if a group of delegates wish to start a Social Room, just go to the Zoom Meeting space, find the Host, and ask them to find an empty room for you. These could be for conversation with friends old or new, carrying on a discussion after a talk or event, playing a game, or any other purpose you like.

### **301) 309) Brian Sibley**

An hour in the company of Brian Sibley, writer of the BBC radio dramatization of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Tales from the Perilous Realm*; author of *The Maps of Tolkien's Middle-earth* and a number of Movie related books including *The Lord of the Rings: Official Movie Guide* and *Peter Jackson: A Film-maker's Journey*.

Note – there is a booking form for these Social Rooms as we expect places to be popular.

[\[Friday\]](#) [\[Sunday\]](#)

### **302) Maureen Layden**

Join us for good cheer in dark times! Let's meet and share how the professor has helped all of us get through this year – our own planet's "Scouring of the Shire".

Bring your favorite ale or vintage wine, or a cuppa would work as well! Put your feet up, turn on the seeing-stone, er... Zoom, and be prepared to laugh, sing, dance, or just sit back and listen with your pipe puffing.

[\[Friday\]](#)

### **303) 308) Lauren Brand**

"All eyes were turned southwards, and soon a murmur rose: "There is dust away there! They are coming!" (*The Return of the King*, "Minas Tirith")

Meet up with your friends from Southern lands who share your love of Tolkien's works and swap stories about your journeying in Middle-earth. Though we Aussies (and perhaps some Kiwis too) may be separated by different time zones and thousands of kilometres, let's get to know each other.

Visitors from Northern realms and distant time zones who fancy joining us for second breakfast before the Oxonmoot day gets into full swing are of course most welcome!

[\[Saturday\]](#) [\[Sunday\]](#)

### **304) Olivia Oddi**

Per tutti gli italiani che partecipano all'Oxonmoot, uno spazio digitale in pausa pranzo (o spuntino!) per incontrarsi, chiacchierare e scambiare idee ed esperienze intorno alle opere di Tolkien.

A lunchtime (or alternative meal/snack/drink for those in other time zones) Tolkien enthusiasts' gathering for Italian speakers. An open space for chatting, socializing and making connections through digital space!

Language: Italian

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **305) Juli Thompson**

Join Juli as the Saturday events wind towards a close to mull over what you've seen, discuss what's to come, and revel in all things Tolkien.

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **306) Ian Barnstead**

Following on from the final Talk of the Saturday programme, a chance to keep the discussions going – or move them on to totally new ground.

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **307) Lara Amrod**

Targeting all our delegates around the Pacific Rim, the folk on the West Coast of the US pass the baton of Oxonmoot Online to those in Australia, Japan and Singapore!

[\[Saturday\]](#)

### **310) Stef Portersmith**

In true Hobbit style, a Second Breakfast Social. Join Stef for an informal chat over coffee and sharing of news from Bree - or anywhere else. A place to get to know each other better.

[\[Sunday\]](#)

### **311) Jeremy Edmonds**

Join Jeremy to talk about collecting Tolkien, or, frankly, anything else that comes to mind!

[\[Sunday\]](#)