

Friday

10:30-11:00 am

Plenary Session Room

Tolkien's Crossing of Revisionary Boundaries
Chris Gavaler and Nathaniel Goldberg

Some novelists revise their stories by restarting them. Others revise by revealing new things about them. Still others revise simply by continuing them. All of these kinds of revisions are common, but J.R.R. Tolkien crossed revisionary boundaries by engaging in all three simultaneously.

In 1937 Tolkien published the first edition of *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. In 1951 he restarted the story by publishing the second edition; among other changes, Tolkien replaced the initial account of Bilbo's encounter with Gollum (in Chapter 5, "Riddles in the Dark") with a darker version. In 1954 in *The Lord of the Rings* (in the Prologue and in Book 2, Chapter 2, "The Council of Elrond") Tolkien revealed that the initial account was a "lie" and the darker version was "the true account" of what had actually happened. Also in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien continued the darker version from the 1951 edition of *The Hobbit* directly.

Using Tolkien as our exemplar, we identify these three kinds of revisions—restarts, revelations, and continuations—as reboots, retcons, and sequels, and determine the necessary and sufficient conditions for each kind of revision. We conclude that the 1951 editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* stand in multiple revisionary relations to the 1937 edition. Tolkien crossed revisionary boundaries in his different works: sometimes even in the same ones.

Breakout Room 1

SilmFilm Project Workshop
Nicholas Palazzo and others

The Silmarillion Film Project, spearheaded by Professor Corey Olsen, Trish Lambert, and Dave Kale, has completed the third season of its theoretical adaptation of Tolkien's *Silmarillion* to the screen in the form of a long-running TV drama. We have met the Ainur and watched them shape Arda while engaged in conflict with their nemesis, Melkor. We have met the Elves, journeyed with them through Middle Earth to Valinor, and seen the Bliss of Aman plunged into Darkness by Melkor, and his temperamental ally, Ungoliant. We have seen the development of civilization amongst the Sindarin Elves under the guidance of Thingol and his Maiar Queen, Melian. We have seen the Rebellion of the Noldor, and their Flight to Middle Earth. We have seen Feanor's descent into obsession and madness, and his death at the hands of Melkor's balrogs.

Now, we call for aid. Presented with our outlines, you will band together to choose a scene which you would like to flesh out into an actual script with dialogue. This experiment will give you some insights into what the SilmFilm Project is about, and hopefully, encourage everyone to engage with the text at a deeper level than even a close reading provides.

Breakout Room 2

“A translator is not free”: J. R. R. Tolkien’s Guidelines for Translation and Their Application in *Sir Orfeo*
Curtis Weyant

While bemoaning his struggles with translating the Middle English poem “Pearl,” Tolkien declared to his aunt, Jane Neave, that ‘a translator is not free’: but he neglected to delineate the specific rules by which he believed translators were shackled. Fortunately, elsewhere in his writings, Tolkien provides hints and directives on how to approach translating. This paper collects Tolkien’s translation guidelines from across several of his works, and it describes how he applied them in his own translations, using his posthumously published translation of *Sir Orfeo* as a basis for demonstration, particularly in comparison to the Auchinleck manuscript version as published by Kenneth Sisam (for which Tolkien provided a glossary) and the Middle English edition Tolkien prepared for his 1944 naval cadets’ course on the poem.

11:00-11:30 am

Plenary Session Room

The Postmodern Kaleidoscope of London Below in Neil Gaiman’s *Neverwhere*
Chris Yokel

In Neil Gaiman’s first novel *Neverwhere*, an ordinary Londoner named Richard Mayhew is ushered into the fantastical underworld of London Below when he helps the mysterious injured vagrant girl, Door. After crossing paths with her and getting caught up in her story, Richard must traverse the shadowy and dangerous realms of the London underworld. In *London Below*, Neil Gaiman has crafted a postmodern kaleidoscope of a world that melds literary elements such as Greek mythology, Atlantis, Dante’s *Inferno*, *Paradise Lost*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Puss in Boots*, and other stories through which Richard must travel as he undergoes his heroic journey. Gaiman crosses borders between these genres and stories as he relates Richard’s own border crossing from London Above to London Below.

Breakout Room 1

SilmFilm Project Workshop (cont.)
Nicholas Palazzo and others

Breakout Room 2

Getting Sick of It: Narrative Functions of Sickness in *Egils Saga Skallagrímssonar* and *Laxdæla Saga*

Laura Lee Smith

Many characters die in the course of *Egils Saga Skallagrímssonar* and *Laxdæla Saga*, most from battle wounds or homicide, and some from old age or other natural causes. Characters may also take to their beds for various reasons, including grief. But in some instances, the narrator specifically reports that a character is sick. Such mentions warrant attention, because “illness and healing are not presented as central themes of medieval Scandinavians’ mythical understanding of the world” (Hall 196). Indeed, illness in these two sagas, where it is mentioned at all, serves one of three main narrative functions. The first function may be simple “housekeeping”: that is, death moves characters off-stage or furthers the plot by setting up inheritance disputes or the like, and illness is an efficient way of justifying a death without special groundwork or explanation. The second function is that an illness, foreseen by the sufferer to be a fatal one, gives him one last chance to influence the future. The third function is that of a temporary disability that reveals something about the sufferer’s mental or emotional state, or other qualities that would have remained hidden.

11:30-12:00 noon

Plenary Session Room

The composite authorship of *Andreas*
David Maddock

The Old English poem “*Andreas*” has long been a source of controversy in the Anglo-Saxon scholarly community. Although it bears no runic signature, scholars have noted significant stylistic similarities between “*Andreas*” and the four signed poems of Cynewulf, suggesting that they may share a common author. Others have cited affinities with *Beowulf* or grammatical differences from Cynewulf to argue against Cynewulfian authorship. By correlating quantitative analysis of oral-formulaic language with the lexomics techniques of cluster analysis and moving ratios pioneered by Dr. Michael Drout, this paper demonstrates the existence of an older Beowulfian core around which a Cynewulfian poet built the received poem. Understanding the composite nature of “*Andreas*” can bring fresh data to a notorious scholarly controversy.

Breakout Room 1

SilmFilm Project Workshop (cont.)
Nicholas Palazzo and others

Breakout Room 2

The Bitter Watches of the Night: From Anne Elliot to Éowyn of Rohan—Crossing Frontiers from the Home front to the Battlefield
Jennifer Ewing

J. R. R. Tolkien is often accused of either not having enough female characters, or that those present are not as fully realized as his male characters. However, Tolkien's keen understanding of the emotional challenges women face is revealed when we consider the surprising parallelism between the life of Éowyn of Rohan in *The Lord of the Rings* and Anne Elliot of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. Anne's conversation with Captain Harville about which sex is more constant in loving the other seems an odd passage to compare with the discussion that Aragorn, Éomer, and Gandalf have at Éowyn's bedside in the Houses of Healing, but it is exactly this comparison that demonstrates how Tolkien crossed the boundary from high fantasy into topics important in women's literature. Anne claims that women do not forget as quickly as men do because women remain at home, subject to their emotions, while men go out into the world to work, and that distraction aids forgetting. Likewise, Gandalf observes that Éomer had his horses and fields, while his sister, because she was a woman, stayed home caring for her infirm uncle, enduring emotional suffering and feelings of uselessness. Anne's explanation that "We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us" is eerily echoed by Gandalf: "Who knows what she spoke to the darkness, alone, in the bitter watches of the night, when all her life seemed shrinking, and the walls of her bower closing in about her?"

This presentation will discuss the nearly twenty commonalities found between the two women as they cross the frontier from the home front to the battlefield, including their paternal and sibling relationships, familial duties, appearances, choices of husbands, motifs of loneliness and death, and decisions about their futures. Even though they reside in two very different genres, by the end of their respective novels, these women become independent and resilient, knowing their own minds.