



Deutsche Tolkien Gesellschaft e.V.  
*Literatur. Fantasy. Fandom.*



## Tolkien and Politics

17<sup>th</sup> Tolkien Seminar (29-31 October 2021)  
of the German Tolkien Society e.V. (DTG) at the Philipps University of Marburg

### Call for Papers

*My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control not whiskered men with bombs) – or to ‘unconstitutional’ Monarchy.*  
(J.R.R. Tolkien, letter to Christopher Tolkien, 29 Nov. 1943; *Letters* no. 52)

There probably isn't any book that couldn't be read politically, so it comes as no surprise that this would also be the case with *The Lord of the Rings*. As with many other themes, an enormous range of different ways of interpreting the text can be seen, as Schneidewind and Weinrich showed in their essay 'Examples of the Exploitation of Middle-earth'. For example, Italian neofascists in the 1970s encountered one another in 'Camp Hobbit', while in 1993, insurgent civilians identified themselves with the hobbits during the Russian constitutional crisis and the struggle for the White House in Moscow. There are, however, only a few academic and scientific studies on the political dimension of Tolkien's work. Aside from van de Bergh's 2005 German-language monograph, only in the last few years have two studies appeared which are dedicated to the subject (Witt and Richards 2014; Hren 2018), but by no means cover it comprehensively. Therefore the 17<sup>th</sup> Tolkien Seminar, building on from the 16<sup>th</sup> Seminar on 'Power and Authority', would like to bring researchers from various disciplines and specialist areas together, in order to research the literary implementation and theoretical foundations of the theme of 'Politics' in Tolkien's work.

Possible approaches for submissions would be:

- Historical and modern concepts of politics and their meaning for the understanding of Tolkien's work
- Political reception and interpretation of Tolkien's work
- Politics and language, or the language of politics in Tolkien's work
- Practice and understanding of politics of the various (non-)human cultures
- Non-anthropocentric politics (e.g. politics and the Ents)
- Gender roles and their function in politics
- Politics and religion

The 17<sup>th</sup> Seminar of the German Tolkien Society is supported by *Walking Tree Publishers* and takes place at the Philipps University of Marburg on 29-31 October 2021. Those interested should send a short synopsis (no longer than one page) and a short biography by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, to:

Thomas Fonet-Ponse: [hither-shore@tolkiengesellschaft.de](mailto:hither-shore@tolkiengesellschaft.de)

- Hren, Joshua. *Middle-earth and the Return of the Common Good. J.R.R. Tolkien and Political Philosophy*. Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2018.
- Schneidewind, Friedhelm und Frank Weinreich. 'Beispiele der Instrumentalisierung von Mittelerde.' In Thomas Honegger, Andrew James Johnston, Friedhelm Schneidewind und Frank Weinreich. *Eine Grammatik der Ethik. Die Aktualität der moralischen Dimension in J.R.R. Tolkiens literarischem Werk*. Edition Stein und Baum 1. Saarbrücken: Verlag der Villa Fledermaus, 2005, 27-38.
- van de Bergh, Alexander. *Mittelerde und das 21. Jahrhundert. Zivilisationskritik und alternative Gesellschaftsentwürfe in J.R.R. Tolkiens The Lord of the Rings*. Studien zur anglistischen Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft 23. Trier: WVT, 2005.
- Witt, Jonathan und Jay W. Richards. *The Hobbit Party. The Vision of Freedom that Tolkien Got, and the West Forgot*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2014.