



Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition / Ośrodek Badań nad Tradycją Antyczną (OBTA)

Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw / Wydział „Artes Liberales” UW

invites you to a lecture in the cycle / zaprasza na wykład z cyklu

OBTAMISTIC MEETINGS / SPOTKANIA OBTYMISTÓW

24 I 2022 at / o godz. 15.00 / 3 p.m. CET (poniedziałek / Monday)

Online: <https://zoom.us/j/98871209888?pwd=VUUwN2RGcFZnZ3pUSDVpd1htdWpwZz09>

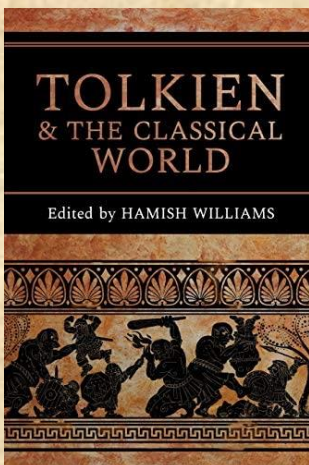
Identyfikator spotkania / Meeting ID: 988 7120 9888

Kod dostępu / Access code: Tolkien

Dr Hamish Williams

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J.R.R. Tolkien's Utopianism and the Classics



The literature of J.R.R. Tolkien is characterised by utopianism as a form of literary thought. The 'end of the frontier' in the 19th century engendered a cultural shift towards imagining alternative worlds in science fiction and fantasy. Tolkien's Middle-Earth was among the most widely received of these defamiliarised Ou-topias or 'Nowhere-places' in 20th-century popular fiction and culture. Yet a large part of Tolkien's utopian thought was not constructed through building a 'new continent' but, rather, in re-constructing 'an old continent' – a form of 'retrotopianism', in which the classical world plays an essential role. Tolkien rewrites places from ancient, Graeco-Roman narratives in order to explore Middle-Earth as Eu-topia, a place for evaluating and expressing ideals.

Hamish Williams is a Junior Fellow at the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies in Warsaw. He has previously held a Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Institute of English and American Studies, Friedrich Schiller University Jena. His primary field of research is Classical Reception Studies, focusing on the post-classical afterlives and reimaginings of ancient Greek and Roman thought; but he is also broadly interested in literary studies from the perspective of the history of cultural ideas, covering topics such as utopianism, the sublime, and hospitality. His previous project explored classical reception in fantasy writings, with the edited volume *Tolkien and the Classical World* and the upcoming monograph *J.R.R. Tolkien's Utopianism and the Classics*, while his current project focuses on modern receptions of Minoan Crete. Beyond academic writing, Hamish also 'practises his research', trying his hand at children's fantasy stories (ahvobraiths.nl/hamish-williams/).

