

International Conference
**"Fantasy in Central Europe – Central European Fantasy: Context,
Directions, and the Legacy of J.R.R. Tolkien"**

Call for Papers

Faculty of Arts and Letters, Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia
29-30 April 2022

Due in part to the success of converging media and adaptations, fantasy has recently been rediscovered as a trending genre paradigm in Western literary and media scholarship. It is perceived as a conduit for underlying cultural ideas about world-building and historical nostalgia, transmediality, fandom and participatory culture as well as media convergence. The fantasy genre has seen an upsurge in post-socialist Central Europe as well. Yet, while the fandom is increasing, the scholarly study of the Central European fantasy tradition, and within that, Tolkien's legacy as a relatively under-explored area, has lagged behind, with fantasy still being considered a niche genre situated on the popular end of the literary scale. This conference proposes to correct this oversight and re-contextualize concepts and discourses about the position of fantasy in a post-socialist Central-European context. It also seeks to examine the impact of Tolkien's legacy on the re-positioning of fantasy in Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian popular culture.

This event aims at combining historical investigations of the development of fantasy through national literatures of Central Europe, and methodological reflections on the metamorphoses that ensure the survival and dissemination of fantasy works.

Successful proposals will address (but are not limited to) the following:

- the ways the fantasy genre(s) have been perceived, disseminated, studied, and most recently, taught at universities in Central Europe
- what the shifting focus of literary scholarship towards popular genres reveals about forms of cultural import from Anglophone contexts between and across media / between and across literary fiction and screen media
- how fantasy's world-building helps circulate ideas about racial, political and geographic otherness, domination and equity, and finally, mythological conceptions of good vs. evil, from socialist times to the present
- how manifestations of historical nostalgia, transmediality, fandom and participatory culture as well as media convergence mobilize the various (local and global) historical legacies of fantasy in a Central-European context
- what is the relationship between discourses on the fantasy genre (and within that, Tolkien's work) and the political, economic and cultural anxieties in post-socialist Central Europe, and what they reveal about the ways we negotiate local cultural legacies in relation to global ones
- the reception of Tolkien's work in Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary (both pre- and post- 1989, but with an emphasis on the contemporary situation)
- translations of Tolkien's work in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary.
- reflections of Tolkien's legacy in contemporary Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian fantasy writing (across literary fiction and screen media)

Abstracts of 250 words with a brief author bio note (100 words) with "Fantasy and Tolkien in Central Europe" in the subject line should be sent to the editors: Janka Kascakova at janka.kascakova@ku.sk and David Levente Palatinus at david.palatinus@ku.sk. The deadline for abstract submission is **28 February, 2022**.

We plan for this event to take place face to face / on site.

A wide range of possible COVID-safe scenarios and social distancing solutions are under consideration. While there is still a level of uncertainty regarding the safe organisation of academic events, the local team is optimistically and circumspectly working on setting up the best and safest possible conference. If the circumstances so require, we are prepared to organize the event in a hybrid/fully online form.