

Representations of Nature in Middle-earth



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Tolkien's portrayal of nature in Middle-earth has been interpreted in a variety of ways, often depending on the context of the reading. Some have seen Middle-earth and its potential destroyer, the Ring, as an allegory of the European continent under the threat of the atomic bomb, while others have embraced it as an artistic expression of the Green movement's agenda in the face of industrial abuse. Some have read nature in Tolkien's work in terms of myth and religion; yet others take the exhaustive descriptions of the physical environment as a sign that Middle-earth itself is the central protagonist of the stories. All in all, nature in Middle-earth plays a crucial role not only in the creation of atmospheres and settings that enhance the realism as well as the emotional appeal of the secondary world; it also acts as an active agent of change within the setting and the story. This collection of essays explores Middle-earth as an ecological entity, a scene for metaphysical speculation, an arboreal depository of cultural memory and a reflection of real-world natural and imperialistic processes.



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