



Meditations on Middle-Earth: New Writing on the Worlds of J. R. R. Tolkien by Orson Scott Card, Ursula K. Le Guin, Raymond E. Feist, Terry Pratchett, Charles de Lint, George R. R. Martin, and more

By Karen Haber, John Howe

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NOMINATED FOR THE 2002 HUGO AND LOCUS AWARD

When J.R.R. Tolkien created the extraordinary world of Middle-earth and populated it with fantastic, archetypal denizens, reinventing the heroic quest, the world hardly noticed. Sales of *The Lord of the Rings* languished for the better part of two decades, until the Ballantine editions were published here in America. By late 1950s, however, the books were selling well and beginning to change the face of fantasy. . . . forever.

A generation of students and aspiring writers had their hearts and imaginations captured by the rich tapestry of the Middle-earth mythos, the larger-than-life heroic characters, the extraordinary and exquisite nature of Tolkien's prose, and the unending quest to balance evil with good. These young readers grew up to become the successful writers of modern fantasy. They created their own worlds and universes, in some cases their own languages, and their own epic heroic quests. And all of them owe a debt of gratitude to the works and the author who first set them on the path.

In *Meditations on Middle-earth*, sixteen bestselling fantasy authors share details of their personal relationships with Tolkien's mythos, for it inspired them all. Had there been no *Lord of the Rings*, there would also have been no *Earthsea* books by Ursula K. Le Guin; no *Song of Ice and Fire* saga from George R. R. Martin; no *Tales of Discworld* from Terry Pratchett; no *Legends of Alvin Maker* from Orson Scott Card. Each of them was influenced by the master mythmaker, and now each reveals the nature of that influence and their personal relationships with the greatest fantasy novels ever written in the English language.

If you've never read the Tolkien books, read these essays and discover the depthy and beauty of his work. If you are a fan of *The Lord of the Rings*, the candid comments of these modern mythmakers will give you new insight into the subtlety, power, and majesty of Tolkien's tales and how he told them.

Meditations on Middle-Earth is a 2002 Hugo Award Nominee for Best Related Work.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If you remember where you were when you first read *The Hobbit* or the Lord of the Rings trilogy, then this collection of essays by some of fantasy and science fiction's most popular authors is worth a look. J.R.R. Tolkien's impact on fantastic fiction--and its writers--is explored in contributions that range from intensely personal expressions of the power and beauty of Tolkien's work to more analytical examinations of his style, language, and influences.

Standouts include Michael Swanwick's thoughtful and powerful meditation on heroism and consequences; Ursula K. Le Guin's analysis of narrative rhythm and language in the trilogy; Terri Windling's moving reflection on an escape from abuse fueled by the power of fairy tales; and Douglas A. Anderson's examination of the critical response to Tolkien's work.

This is an uneven collection, with a couple of downright clunkers, but it should appeal to Tolkien aficionados who are interested in the master's influence on those working in the field today. --Roz Genessee

From Publishers Weekly

An unapologetic tie-in with the release of the first highly anticipated Lord of the Rings film, this anthology presents appreciative essays in honor of the master of Middle-earth from such major fantasy and SF authors as Harry Turtledove, Raymond Feist, Terry Pratchett, George R.R. Martin and the late Poul Anderson. All thank Tolkien, some sardonically, for making the fantasy genre so popular. Ursula K. Le Guin discusses obvious and concealed poetry in the trilogy, while Douglas A. Anderson treats Tolkien's critics, admitting that the posthumously published writings, edited by the author's son, Christopher, are "not always easy to read," a view seconded by several other contributors. Less successful as a scholarly exercise is Orson Scott Card's "How Tolkien Means," which focuses on allegory, a mode Tolkien rejected. Most contributors celebrate the beauty of the writing in the major books, although Michael Swanwick finds them "sad with wisdom" in his essay, "A Changling Returns." Swanwick takes the lead in pointing out the importance of the humble hobbit Sam Gamgee as a character. In a dialogue between illustrators and brothers Tim and Greg Hildebrandt, Tim admits that "Tolkien was never a big supporter of illustration to accompany works of fantasy." Alas, Howe's vague and unimaginative pencil sketches only serve to support Tolkien's case. Editor Haber offers an adoring but welcome antidote to the more pompous exegeses of the "author of the century." (Nov. 23)and "Lord of the Rings Redux" (PW, Sept. 10).

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From [Booklist](#)

Published to coincide with the release of the first Lord of the Rings movie, this set of essays on the fantasy classic's influence sets the bar of quality very high for other tie-ins. All but two contributors write fantasy themselves, and nearly all those say Tolkien inspired their work, and some attest to extraliterary inspiration, too. Esther M. Friesner comically reveals that Tolkien's heroic elf Legolas affected her love life, and the superb anthologist Terri Windling concludes her literary examination cum memoir by disclosing how Tolkien and fairy tales encouraged her to flee her abusive stepfather. Of the nonfantasist contributors, Tolkien scholar Douglas A. Anderson surveys Tolkien's whole output and major assessments of it, and

Glenn Herdling interviews fellow artists Greg and Tim Hildebrandt, illustrators of the famous Tolkien calendars (see Gregory Hildebrandt's *Greg and Tim Hildebrandt: The Tolkien Years* [BKL JI 01]). Ursula K. Le Guin analyzes "Rhythmic Pattern in The Lord of the Rings," and Orson Scott Card becomes theologically provocative in "How Tolkien Means." Except for a few pieces early in the book, this is all good stuff. *Ray Olson*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marcus Galvan:

Do you have favorite book? If you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each guide has different aim as well as goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. They can be reading whatever they have because their hobby will be reading a book. What about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, person feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you'll have this *Meditations on Middle-Earth: New Writing on the Worlds of J. R. R. Tolkien* by Orson Scott Card, Ursula K. Le Guin, Raymond E. Feist, Terry Pratchett, Charles de Lint, George R. R. Martin, and more.

Gertrude Barrett:

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Arturo McDaniel:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray you actually, why because this *Meditations on Middle-Earth: New Writing on the Worlds of J. R. R. Tolkien* by Orson Scott Card, Ursula K. Le Guin, Raymond E. Feist, Terry Pratchett, Charles de Lint, George R. R. Martin, and more guide written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that could be understand by anyone who all read the book. Written within good manner for you, leaking every ideas and composing skill only for eliminate your current hunger then you still uncertainty *Meditations on Middle-Earth: New Writing on the Worlds of J. R. R. Tolkien* by Orson Scott Card, Ursula K. Le Guin, Raymond E. Feist, Terry Pratchett, Charles de Lint, George R. R. Martin, and more

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Jimmy Dolce:

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