

# The Philosophy Of Tolkien The Worldview Behind The Lord Of The Rings

If you're interested in science fiction but crave something with a little more intellectual heft than your typical space opera, give David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus* a try. Widely praised by critics as one of the most philosophically advanced science fiction novels, the book follows two intrepid spiritual seekers through a series of remarkable interstellar adventures.

A controversial approach to the Lord of the Rings and Tolkien's other work. Unlike the conventional view that his fantasy writing was an escape from reality, Pearce argues that Tolkien saw his stories as a leap into reality. This is because of Tolkien's own view of life, faith and the supernatural. This understanding is crucial to fully appreciating both *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* and *Middle Earth*. A fascinating look at the fantasy and philosophy of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R Tolkien. The two men were friends and fellow professors at Oxford, renowned Christian thinkers who both “found it necessary to create for the purposes of their fiction other worlds—not utopias or dystopias, but different worlds.

*The Moon and Sixpence* tells the story of English

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stockbroker Charles Strickland, who abandons his wife and child to travel to Paris to become a painter. First published in 1919 in the United Kingdom by Heinemann, the story is inspired by the life of the French artist Paul Gauguin. It's told in episodic form from a first-person perspective. The narrator, who came to know Strickland through his wife's literary parties, begins the story as Strickland leaves for Paris. Strickland's new life becomes a stark contrast to his life in London. While he was once a well-off banker living a comfortable life, he must now sleep in cheap hotels while suffering both illness and hunger. Maugham spent a year in Paris in 1904, which is when he first heard the story of Gauguin, the banker who left his family and profession to pursue his passion for art. He heard the story from others who had known and worked with Gauguin. Ten years later Maugham travelled to Tahiti where he met others who had known Gauguin during the artist's time there. Inspired by the stories he heard, Maugham wrote *The Moon and Sixpence*. Although based on the life of Paul Gauguin, the story is a work of fiction. This book is part of the Standard Ebooks project, which produces free public domain ebooks. Many readers drawn into the heroic tales of J. R. R. Tolkien's imaginary world of Middle-earth have given little conscious thought to the importance of the land itself in his stories or to the vital roles played by the flora and fauna of that land. As a result, The

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Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, and The Silmarillion are rarely considered to be works of environmental literature or mentioned together with such authors as John Muir, Rachel Carson, or Aldo Leopold.

Tolkien's works do not express an activist agenda; instead, his environmentalism is expressed in the form of literary fiction. Nonetheless, Tolkien's vision of nature is as passionate and has had as profound an influence on his readers as that of many contemporary environmental writers. The burgeoning field of agrarianism provides new insights into Tolkien's view of the natural world and environmental responsibility. In Ents, Elves, and Eriador, Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans show how Tolkien anticipated some of the tenets of modern environmentalism in the imagined world of Middle-earth and the races with which it is peopled. The philosophical foundations that define Tolkien's environmentalism, as well as the practical outworking of these philosophies, are found throughout his work. Agrarianism is evident in the pastoral lifestyle and sustainable agriculture of the Hobbits, as they harmoniously cultivate the land for food and goods. The Elves practice aesthetic, sustainable horticulture as they shape their forest environs into an elaborate garden. To complete Tolkien's vision, the Ents of Fangorn Forest represent what Dickerson and Evans label feraculture, which seeks to preserve wilderness in its

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natural form. Unlike the Entwives, who are described as cultivating food in tame gardens, the Ents risk eventual extinction for their beliefs. These ecological philosophies reflect an aspect of Christian stewardship rooted in Tolkien's Catholic faith.

Dickerson and Evans define it as "stewardship of the kind modeled by Gandalf," a stewardship that nurtures the land rather than exploiting its life-sustaining capacities to the point of exhaustion.

Gandalfian stewardship is at odds with the forces of greed exemplified by Sauron and Saruman, who, with their lust for power, ruin the land they inhabit, serving as a dire warning of what comes to pass when stewardly care is corrupted or ignored.

Dickerson and Evans examine Tolkien's major works as well as his lesser-known stories and essays, comparing his writing to that of the most important naturalists of the past century. A vital contribution to environmental literature and an essential addition to Tolkien scholarship, *Ents, Elves, and Eriador* offers both Tolkien fans and environmentalists an understanding of Middle-earth that has profound implications for environmental stewardship in the present and the future of our own world.

Anticipating the great amount of interest in Tolkien's writings due in part to the major theatrical movie release on his classic *The Lord of the Rings*, this highly readable collection of writings celebrates

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J.R.R. Tolkien's great literary legacy and the spiritual values that undergird his imaginary Middle-earth. Tolkien: A Celebration includes personal recollections by George Sayer and Walter Hooper, and many fascinating pieces by authors such as James Schall, S.J., Stratford Caldecott and Stephen Lawhead, exploring the threads of inspiration and purpose in his major works. These dip into subjects such as The Sense of Time in Lord of the Rings, Tolkien: Master of Middle-earth, and Tolkien, Lewis and Christian Myth. Fourteen writers contributed to this insightful work on Tolkien, and it will be much-treasured by those who regard him as a literary hero. - Publisher.

Anyone who has read The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings can gather that their author hated tyranny, but few know that the novelist who once described himself as a hobbit Òin all but sizeÓ wasÑeven by hobbit standardsÑa zealous proponent of economic freedom and small government. There is a growing concern among many that the West is sliding into political, economic, and moral bankruptcy. In his beloved novels of Middle-Earth, J.R.R. Tolkien has drawn us a map to freedom. Scholar Joseph Pearce, who himself has written articles and chapters on the political significance of TolkienÕs work, testified in his book Literary Giants, Literary Catholics, ÒIf much has been written on the religious significance of The Lord of the Rings, less has been written on its

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political significance—and the little that has been written is often erroneous in its conclusions and ignorant of Tolkien’s intentions. Much more work is needed in this area, not least because Tolkien stated, implicitly at least, that the political significance of the work was second only to the religious in its importance. Several books ably explore how Tolkien’s Catholic faith informed his fiction. None until now have centered on how his passion for liberty and limited government also shaped his work, or how this passion grew directly from his theological vision of man and creation. The Hobbit Party fills this void. The few existing pieces that do focus on the subject are mostly written by scholars with little or no formal training in literary analysis, and even less training in political economy. Witt and Richards bring to The Hobbit Party a combined expertise in literary studies, political theory, economics, philosophy, and theology. J. R. R. Tolkien’s magnum opus, The Lord of the Rings has been beloved for generations, selling millions of copies and selling millions more tickets through its award-winning film adaptations. The immense cultural impact of this epic is undeniable, but the deeper meaning of the story often goes unnoticed. Here, Joseph Pearce, author of Bilbo’s Journey uncovers the rich—and distinctly Christian—meaning just beneath the surface of The Lord of the Rings. Make the journey with Frodo as

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he makes his perilous trek from the Shire to Mordor, while Pearce expertly reveals the deeper, spiritual significance. Did you know that the events of The Lord of the Rings are deeply intertwined with the Christian calendar? Or what the Ring, with its awesome and terrible power represents? How do the figures of good and evil in the story reflect those forces in our own lives? Find the answers to these questions and much more in Frodo's Journey.

In this book, Lisa Coutras explores the structure and complexity of J.R.R. Tolkien's narrative theology, synthesizing his Christian worldview with his creative imagination. She illustrates how, within the framework of a theological aesthetics, transcendental beauty is the unifying principle that integrates all aspects of Tolkien's writing, from pagan despair to Christian joy. J.R.R. Tolkien's Christianity is often held in an unsteady tension with the pagan despair of his mythic world. Some critics portray these as incompatible, while Christian analysis tends to oversimplify the presence of religious symbolism. This polarity of opinion testifies to the need for a unifying interpretive lens. The fact that Tolkien saw his own writing as "religious" and "Catholic," yet was preoccupied with pagan mythology, nature, language, and evil, suggests that these areas were wholly integrated with his Christian worldview. Tolkien's Theology of Beauty examines six structural elements, demonstrating that the author's Christianity is deeply embedded in the narrative framework of his creative imagination.

While nothing can equal or replace the adventure in reading Tolkien's masterwork, The Lord of the Rings, Peter Kreeft says that the journey into its underlying philosophy can be another exhilarating adventure. Thus, Kreeft takes the reader

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on a voyage of discovery into the philosophical bones of Middle earth. He organizes the philosophical themes in The Lord of the Rings into 50 categories, accompanied by over 1,000 references to the text of Lord. Since many of the great questions of philosophy are included in the 50-theme outline, this book can also be read as an engaging introduction to philosophy. For each of the philosophical topics in Lord, Kreeft presents tools by which they can be understood. Illustrated.

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One of Tolkien's great appeals to readers is that he offers a world replete with meaning at every level. To read and reread Tolkien is to share his sense of wonder and holiness, to be invited into the presence of a "beauty beyond the circles of the world." It is to fall in love with a universe that has a beginning and an end, where good and bad are not subjective choices, but objective realities; a created order full of grace, though damaged by sin, in which friendship is the seedbed of the virtues, and where the greatest warriors finally become the greatest healers. A correspondent once told J. R. R. Tolkien that his work seemed illumined "by an invisible lamp." That lamp is the Church, and its light is the imaginative



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sensibility that we live in a sacramental world. This new book by the author of *The Trial of Man* examines in depth the influence of Catholic sacramentality on the thought and work of Tolkien, with major emphasis on *The Lord of the Rings*, but including his literary essays, epistolary poem "Mythopoeia," short story "Leaf by Niggle," and *The Silmarillion*. Here is a signal contribution to a deeper understanding of Tolkien, whose mythological world is meant to "recover" the meaning of our own as a grace-filled place, pointing toward its Creator. Contains over fifteen essays that discuss philosophical topics in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" providing new insights into the characters and plot.

Teens live in a complicated world. They are constantly bombarded by messages from their friends, parents, teachers, the internet, and their churches, and not all of these messages agree or line up with each other. How do students figure out who to listen to? How do they figure out what is true? *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* will show teens practical ways to filter out the wrong messages and focus on what is real. Using teachings from highly respected, loved, and well-known writers, teacher Matthew Dominguez will show teens the power of story as he guides them through a study of world religions, philosophies, and worldview, and gives them a firm foundation to stand on as they prepare to face the world.

If you could sit down with St. Thomas Aquinas over a pint of beer and ask him any one question, what would it be? *Pints With Aquinas* contains over 50 deep thoughts from the Angelic doctor on subjects such as God, virtue, the sacraments, happiness, alcohol, and more. If you've always wanted to read St. Thomas but have been too intimidated to try, this book is for you. So, get your geek on, pull up a bar stool and grab a cold one, here we go!" "He alone enlightened the Church more than all other doctors; a man can derive

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more profit in a year from his books than from pondering all his life the teaching of others." - Pope John XXII

In this new work, Dickerson offers a specifically Christian exploration of morality, choices, and free will in "The Lord of the Rings."

A response to our fractured political discourse, *Hobbit Virtues* speaks to the importance of "virtue ethics" by examining the fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien—with particular attention to his hobbits. Tolkien's works resonate with so many readers in part because Bilbo, Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin demonstrate Classical, Judeo-Christian, Medieval, and even Hindu and Confucian virtues. Tolkien ennobles the small, the humble, and the marginalized in his Middle-earth writings and presents leaders who are hesitant to exercise power, are courteous, and value wisdom and learning. Each chapter in *Hobbit Virtues* consists of a wide-ranging discussion of a single virtue, exemplified by a character in Middle-earth, explaining its philosophical or theological roots and how the virtue is still relevant in a modern democracy. It will also include appendices where readers can find passages in Tolkien's and Lewis's works that discuss virtue ethics, and a glossary of virtues from ancient to modern, East to West. Tolkien's readers come from many different religious and secular backgrounds and the pleasure and profundity of *Hobbit Virtues* is that mutual respect for public virtues is, especially now, necessary for a well-functioning pluralistic society.

Can *The Lord of the Rings* help us understand the Christian faith more deeply? From the inaugural Hansen Lectureship series, Wheaton College president Philip

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Ryken mines the riches of Tolkien's theological imagination. In the characters of Gandalf, Frodo, and Aragorn, Ryken hears echoes of the one who is the true prophet, priest, and king, considering what that threefold office means for the calling of all Christians.

In this engaging fictional conversation, Peter Kreeft gives credible voices to C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Billy Graham as they discuss one of the most contentious questions in the history of Christianity: Is Jesus symbolically or substantially present in the Eucharist? These widely respected modern Christian witnesses represent three important Western theological traditions. Graham, an ordained Southern Baptist minister who traversed the world and the airwaves to spread the good news of salvation, represents evangelical Protestantism. Lewis, an Oxford professor, a prolific Christian apologist, and the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, was a member of the Church of England. Also an Oxford don, Tolkien was a friend of Lewis, the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, and a Roman Catholic. While Lewis and Tolkien likely discussed the Eucharist during their long friendship, the conversation in this book never took place—but it could have, says Kreeft, who faithfully presents the views of these three impressive men.

Seminar paper from the year 2018 in the subject English - History of Literature, Eras, grade: 1.3, University of Cologne (Englisches Seminar 2), course: Frankenstein to Dracula, language: English, abstract: This research paper will analyze the transformation of Sméagol to Gollum and his personality throughout the series, his rehabilitation and taming but also the spirit of good and

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evil. There will also be a pointing out on his style of speech and his conversations with himself throughout the tale. To sum it up, the main goal of the illustration by Gollum, is to highlight the morality and philosophical significance of The Lord of the Rings, but moreover the inner conflict between this creature of Gollum and his own fight against his desire for the ring.

Since the appearance of The Lord of the Rings in 1954, J. R. R. Tolkien's works have always sold briskly, appealing to a wide and diverse audience of intellectuals, religious believers, fantasy enthusiasts, and science fiction aficionados. Now, Peter Jackson's film version of Tolkien's trilogy—with its accompanying Rings-related paraphernalia and publicity—is playing a unique role in the dissemination of Tolkien's imaginative creation to the masses. Yet, for most readers and viewers, the underlying meaning of Middle-earth has remained obscure. Bradley Birzer has remedied that with this fresh study. In *J. R. R. Tolkien's Sanctifying Myth: Understanding Middle-earth*, Birzer explains the surprisingly specific religious symbolism that permeates Tolkien's Middle-earth legendarium. He also explores the social and political views that motivated the Oxford don, ultimately situating Tolkien within the Christian humanist tradition represented by Thomas More and T. S. Eliot, Dante and C. S. Lewis. Birzer argues that through the genre of myth Tolkien created a world that is essentially truer than the one we think we see around us every day, a world that transcends the colorless disenchantment of our postmodern age. "A small knowledge of history," Tolkien once wrote, "depresses

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one with the sense of the everlasting weight of human iniquity.” As Birzer demonstrates, Tolkien’s recognition of evil became mythologically manifest in the guise of Ringwraiths, Orcs, Sauron, and other dark beings. But Tolkien was ultimately optimistic: even weak, bumbling hobbits and humans, as long as they cling to the Good, can finally prevail. Bradley Birzer has performed a great service in elucidating Tolkien’s powerful moral vision. A scholar explores the ideas within *The Lord of the Rings* and the world created by J. R. R. Tolkien: “A most valuable and timely book” (Ursula K. Le Guin, *Los Angeles Times*—bestselling author of *Changing Planes*). What are millions of readers all over the world getting out of reading the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy? *Defending Middle-earth* argues, in part, that the appeal for fans goes far deeper than just quests and magic rings and hobbits. In fact, through this epic, Tolkien found a way to provide something close to spirit in a secular age. This thoughtful book focuses on three main aspects of Tolkien’s fiction: the social and political structure of Middle-earth and how the varying cultures within it find common cause in the face of a shared threat; the nature and ecology of Middle-earth and how what we think of as the natural world joins the battle against mindless, mechanized destruction; and the spirituality and ethics of Middle-earth—for which the author provides a particularly insightful and resonant examination. Includes a new afterword

"Tolkien and Philosophy" is a theme that has not yet been studied with the "philological" accuracy and the textual knowledge that are required to avoid squeezing

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the Professor's works inside conceptual frameworks that, rather than exposing their intrinsic value, risk losing both their profound meaning and their inherent beauty. What is the relationship between Tolkien's work and Philosophy? The question, if taken seriously, is by no means trivial. For these reasons we wish this book to become, in both method and content, an essential point of reference for anyone interested in better understanding the significant elements that sometimes link, sometimes divide, the "philologist" Tolkien from proper speculative philosophy.

"An admirable and thought-provoking consideration of the underlying themes of *The Hobbit*, following the there-and-back-again progress from its famous first line on through to Bilbo's return home at the story's end." -- Douglas A. Anderson, author of *The Annotated Hobbit*

*The Hobbit* is one of the most widely read and best-loved books of the twentieth century. Now Corey Olsen takes readers deep within the text to uncover its secrets and delights. Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's "*The Hobbit*" is a fun, thoughtful, and insightful companion volume designed to bring a thorough and original new reading of this great work to a general audience. Professor Corey Olsen takes readers on an in-depth journey through *The Hobbit* chapter by chapter, revealing the stories within the story: the dark desires of dwarves and the sublime laughter of elves, the nature of evil and its hopelessness, the mystery of divine providence and human choice, and, most of all, the transformation within the life of Bilbo Baggins. Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's "*The Hobbit*" is a book that will make *The Hobbit* come alive for readers as

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never before.

J. R. R. Tolkien was a profoundly metaphysical thinker, according to this new study of his works. *The Flame Imperishable* follows the thought of Aquinas as a guide in laying bare the deeper foundations of many of the more familiar themes from Tolkien's legendarium, including such notions as sub-creation, free will, evil, and eucatastrophe.

J. R. R. Tolkien is perhaps best known for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but it is in *The Silmarillion* that the true depth of Tolkien's Middle-earth can be understood. *The Silmarillion* was written before, during, and after Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. A collection of stories, it provides information alluded to in Tolkien's better known works and, in doing so, turns *The Lord of the Rings* into much more than a sequel to *The Hobbit*, making it instead a continuation of the mythology of Middle-earth. Verlyn Flieger's expanded and updated edition of *Splintered Light*, a classic study of Tolkien's fiction first published in 1983, examines *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* in light of Owen Barfield's linguistic theory of the fragmentation of meaning. Flieger demonstrates Tolkien's use of Barfield's concept throughout the fiction, showing how his central image of primary light splintered and refracted acts as a metaphor for the languages, peoples, and history of Middle-earth. This book invites readers into Tolkien's world

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through the lens of a variety of philosophers, all of whom owe a rich debt to the Neoplatonic philosophical tradition. It places Tolkien's mythology against a wider backdrop of Catholic philosophy and asks serious questions about the nature of creation, the nature of God, what it means to be good, and the problem of evil. Halsall sets Tolkien alongside both his contemporaries and ancient authors, revealing his careful use of literary devices inspired by them to craft his own "mythology for England."

An Arabic proverb says, "Before you shoot the arrow truth, dip in in honey." The works of JRR Tolkien are unique in English Literature, as they are filled with hundreds of original proverbs. 'Not all those who wander are lost, ' 'Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens, ' and 'Never laugh at live dragons' are all poetic, wise, and convincingly real-sounding, but they are also a lens, through which more can be seen. These proverbs belong to entirely invented wisdom traditions and reflect the culture, the philosophical worldview, and the history of those who use them. In "The Proverbs of Middle-earth," David Rowe discovers and investigates the degree to which the 'soul' of each of these fictional civilizations can be understood through the lens of their proverbs. What is revealed enriches the reader's experience of and delight in Middle-earth, as well as illuminating the astounding depth and detail of creativity behind it. Arrows dipped in honey



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abound!

A philosophical exploration of J.R.R. Tolkien's beloved classic—just in time for the December 2012 release of Peter Jackson's new film adaptation, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is one of the best-loved fantasy books of all time and the enchanting "prequel" to *The Lord of the Rings*. With the help of some of history's great philosophers, this book ponders a host of deep questions raised in this timeless tale, such as: Are adventures simply "nasty, disturbing, uncomfortable things" that "make you late for dinner," or are they exciting and potentially life-changing events? What duties do friends have to one another? Should mercy be extended even to those who deserve to die? Gives you new insights into *The Hobbit's* central characters, including Bilbo Baggins, Gandalf, Gollum, and Thorin and their exploits, from the Shire through Mirkwood to the Lonely Mountain. Explores key questions about *The Hobbit's* story and themes, including: Was the Arkenstone really Bilbo's to give? How should Smaug's treasure have been distributed? Did Thorin leave his "beautiful golden harp" at Bag-End when he headed out into the Wild? (If so, how much could we get for that on eBay?) Draws on the insights of some of the world's deepest thinkers, from Confucius, Plato, and Aristotle to Immanuel Kant, William Blake, and contemporary American philosopher Thomas Nagel. From the happy halls of

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Elrond's Last Homely House to Gollum's "slimy island of rock," this is a must read for longtime Tolkien fans as well as those discovering Bilbo Baggins and his adventures "there and back again" for the first time.

The Lord of the Rings is intended to be applicable to the real world of relationships, religion, pleasure, pain, and politics. Tolkien himself said that his grand tale of wizards, orcs, hobbits, and elves was aimed at truth and good morals in the actual world. Analysis of the popular appeal of The Lord of the Rings (on websites and elsewhere) shows that Tolkien fans are hungry for discussion of the urgent moral and cosmological issues arising out of this fantastic epic story. Can political power be wielded for good, or must it always corrupt? Does technology destroy the truly human? Is it morally wrong to give up hope? Can we find meaning in chance events? In The Lord of the Rings and Philosophy, seventeen young philosophy professors, all of them ardent Tolkien fans and most of them contributors to the four earlier volumes in the Popular Culture and Philosophy series, address some of these important issues and show how clues to their solutions may be found in the imaginary world of Middle-earth. The book is divided into five sections, concerned with Power and the Ring, the Quest for Happiness, Good and Evil in Middle-earth, Time and Mortality, and the Relevance Beginning in the mid-1950s, scholars proposed that

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the Inklings were a unified group centered on fantasy, imagination, and Christianity. Scholars and a few Inklings themselves supported the premise until 1978, when Humphrey Carpenter wrote the first major biography of the group, disputing a unified worldview. Carpenter dedicated an entire chapter to decry any theological or literary unity in the group, arguing disagreement in areas of Christian belief, literary criticism, views of myth, and writing style. Since Carpenter's *The Inklings*, many analyses of the Inklings--and even their predecessors--have continued to show disunity rather than unity in the group. This text overturns the misapplication of a divided worldview among two Inklings, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, and their forerunners, G. K. Chesterton and George MacDonald. Analyzing their literary, scholarly, and interpersonal texts, *The Great Tower of Elfland* clarifies the unities of their thinking through five general categories: literature and language, humanism, philosophy of the personal journey, philosophy of history and civilization, and their Christian mythopoeia. After responding to scholarly arguments that diffuse worldviews, this text introduces some of the literary and interpersonal exchanges among the authors to demonstrate their relationships before examining the popular and lesser-known writings of each to clarify their literary and linguistic theoretical orientations. Rhone analyzes the Renaissance-like Christian humanism

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of these authors, their belief that humans should care for animals and nature, and their assertion of fallen humanity. Next, he takes readers through Tolkien's, Lewis's, Chesterton's, and MacDonald's perspectives of the human journey, analyzing literary motifs of pathways in their texts, roads used to demonstrate their perceptions of free will, fate, and the accompanying discipleship of companions along the way. After noting the individual human journey, Rhone articulates the group's vantages on humanity through civilization and barbarism, myth and science, and even political opinions. Finally, The Great Tower of Elfland recontextualizes the perspectives of MacDonald, Chesterton, Lewis, and Tolkien in lieu of their Christian mythopoeia, the point on which their unity hinges.

"I've been a philosopher for all my adult life and the three most profound books of philosophy that I have ever read are Ecclesiastes, Job, and Song of Songs." These are the opening lines of Kreeft's Three Philosophies of Life. He reflects that there are ultimately only three philosophies of life and each one is represented by one of these books of the Bible-life is vanity; life is suffering; life is love. In these three books Kreeft shows how we have Dante's great epic The Divine Comedy played out, from Hell to Purgatory to Heaven. But it is an epic played out in our hearts and lives, here and now. Just as there is movement in Dante's epic, so there

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is movement in these books, from Ecclesiastes to Job, from Job to Song of Songs. Love is the final answer to Ecclesiastes' quest, the alternative to vanity, and the true meaning of life. Finally, Kreeft sees in these books the epitome of theological virtues of faith, hope and love and "an essential summary of the spiritual history of the world".

While scholars have often cited the influence of medieval texts and society on J.R.R. Tolkien's seminal fantasy creations, the role of the classical world - the literature and thought of ancient Greece and Rome - has received far less attention. This volume of essays explores various ways in which Tolkien's literary creations were shaped by classical epic, myth, poetry, history, philosophy, drama, and language. In making such connections, the contributors to this volume are interested not simply in source-hunting but in how a reception of the classical world can shape the meaning we derive from Tolkien's masterworks. The contributions to this volume by Philip Burton, Lukasz Neubauer, Giuseppe Pezzini, Benjamin Eldon Stevens, Graham Shipley, and several other scholars should pave the way for further discussions between classical studies and fantasy studies.

A compendium of villains of Middle-earth. The vast fictional universe of J. R. R. Tolkien contains many dark terrors to challenge the forces of good. This compendium of villains includes battle timelines, genealogy charts for creature races, striking illustrations, and well-researched commentary on the evil forces that dwell in Middle-earth.

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This unique title is a conversation starter as well as a great read. This work is unofficial and is not authorized by the Tolkien Estate or HarperCollins Publishers. Here is an in-depth look at the role myth, mortality, and religion play in J.R.R. Tolkien's works such as *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*--including Tolkien's private letters and revealing opinions of his own work. Richard L. Purtill brilliantly argues that Tolkien's extraordinary ability to touch his readers' lives through his storytelling--so unlike much modern literature--accounts for his enormous literary success. This book demonstrates the moral depth in Tolkien's work and cuts through current subjectivism and cynicism about morality. A careful reader will find a subtle religious dimension to Tolkien's work--all the more potent because it is below the surface. Purtill reveals that the author's fantasy stories creatively incorporate profound religious and ethical ideas. For example, Purtill shows us how hobbits reflect both the pettiness of parochial humanity and the unexpected heroism of ordinary people in crisis. Purtill effectively addresses larger issues of the place of myth, the relation of religion and morality to literature, the relation of Tolkien's work to traditional mythology, and the lessons Tolkien's work teaches for our own lives.

The world of J. R. R. Tolkien is filled with strange creatures, elaborately crafted lore, ancient tongues, and magic that exists only in fantasy; yet the lessons taught by hobbits and wizards speak powerfully and practically to our real lives. Courage, valor, trust, pride, greed, and jealousy--these are not fictional virtues. This is the stuff

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of real life, the Christian life. Professor and author Louis Markos takes us on the road with Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, with looks at selected classic works of literature as well, to show how great stories bring us so much more than entertainment. They inspire and convict, imparting truth in unforgettable ways. Rediscover the virtue of great storytelling and the power of fantasy to transform our reality.

The surprising and illuminating look at how Tolkien's love of science and natural history shaped the creation of his Middle Earth, from its flora and fauna to its landscapes. The world J.R.R. Tolkien created is one of the most beloved in all of literature, and continues to capture hearts and imaginations around the world. From Oxford to ComiCon, the Middle Earth is analyzed and interpreted through a multitude of perspectives. But one essential facet of Tolkien and his Middle Earth has been overlooked: science. This great writer, creator of worlds and unforgettable character, and inventor of language was also a scientific autodidact, with an innate interest and grasp of botany, paleontologist and geologist, with additional passions for archeology and chemistry. Tolkien was an acute observer of flora and fauna and mined the minds of his scientific friends about ocean currents and volcanoes. It is these layers science that give his imaginary universe—and the creatures and characters that inhabit it—such concreteness. Within this gorgeously illustrated edition, a range of scientists—from astrophysicists to physicians, botanists to volcanologists—explore Tolkien's novels, poems, and letters to reveal their fascinating scientific roots. A

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rewarding combination of literary exploration and scientific discovery, *The Science of Middle Earth* reveals the hidden meaning of the Ring's corruption, why Hobbits have big feet, the origins of the Dwarves, the animals which inspired the dragons, and even whether or not an Ent is possible. Enhanced by superb original drawings, this transportive work will delight both Tolkien fans and science lovers and inspire us to view both Middle Earth—and our own world—with fresh eyes. Political philosophy is nothing other than looking at things political under the aspect of eternity. This book invites us to look philosophically at political things in J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium, demonstrating that Tolkien's potent mythology can be brought into rich, fruitful dialogue with works of political philosophy and political theology as different as Plato's *Timaeus*, Aquinas' *De Regno*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, and Erik Peterson's "Monotheism as a Political Problem." It concludes that a political reading of Tolkien's work is most luminous when conducted by the harmonious lights of *fides et ratio* as found in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. A broad study of Tolkien and the political is especially pertinent in that the legendarium operates on two levels. As a popular mythology it is, in the author's own words "a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times maybe excite them or deeply move them." But the stories of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* contain deeper teachings that can only be drawn out when read philosophically. Written from the vantage of a mind that is deeply Christian, Tolkien's stories grant us



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a revelatory gaze into the major political problems of modernity—from individualism to totalitarianism, sovereignty to surveillance, terror to technocracy. As an “outsider” in modernity, Tolkien invites us to question the modern in a manner that moves beyond reaction into a vivid and compelling vision of the common good. The first ever publication of J.R.R. Tolkien’s final writings on Middle-earth, covering a wide range of subjects and perfect for those who have read and enjoyed *The Silmarillion*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Unfinished Tales*, and *The History of Middle-earth*, and want to learn more about Tolkien’s magnificent world. It is well known that J.R.R. Tolkien published *The Hobbit* in 1937 and *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954–5. What may be less known is that he continued to write about Middle-earth in the decades that followed, right up until the years before his death in 1973. For him, Middle-earth was part of an entire world to be explored, and the writings in *The Nature of Middle-earth* reveal the journeys that he took as he sought to better understand his unique creation. From sweeping themes as profound as Elvish immortality and reincarnation, and the Powers of the Valar, to the more earth-bound subjects of the lands and beasts of Númenor, the geography of the Rivers and Beacon-hills of Gondor, and even who had beards! This new collection, which has been edited by Carl F. Hostetter, one of the world’s leading Tolkien experts, is a veritable treasure-trove offering readers a chance to peer over Professor Tolkien’s shoulder at the very moment of discovery: and on every page, Middle-earth is once again brought to extraordinary life.

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