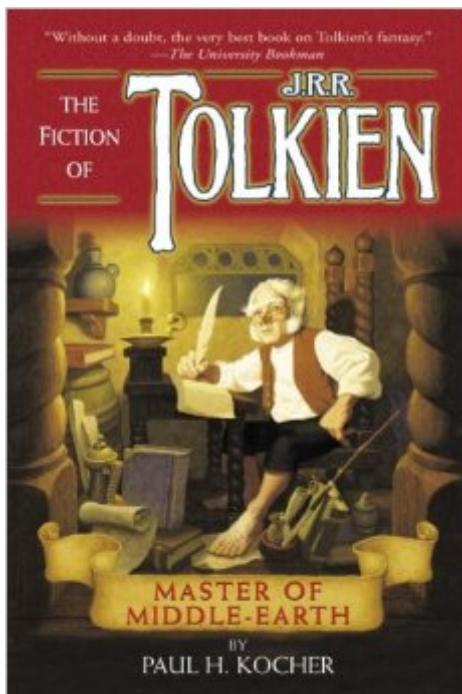


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Master Of Middle-Earth: The Fiction Of J.R.R. Tolkien



Synopsis

As is the case with all great works of art, J. R. R. Tolkien's masterpieces generously repay close attention and study. In this thoroughly entertaining and perceptive volume, winner of the prestigious Mythopoeic Society Scholarship Award, Professor Kocher examines the sources that Tolkien drew upon in fashioning Middle-earth and its inhabitants and provides valuable insights into the author's aims and methods. Ranging from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Silmarillion* and beyond, *Master of Middle-earth* opens the door to a deeper and richer appreciation of Tolkien's magnificent achievement. Inside you will discover: Why Aragorn is the most misunderstood character in *The Lord of the Rings* . . . and its true hero. The origin of Sauron and the nature of evil in Tolkien's universe. The opposing forces of destiny and free will in Frodo's quest. The Cosmology of Middle-earth: Is it our world at an earlier time, or does it exist in a fantastic Elsewhere? How Tolkien's ideas of morality, religion, and social order underlie every aspect of his life's work. Plus a fascinating look at such lesser-known works of Tolkien's as *Leaf by Niggle*, *Smith of Wootton Major*, and many others!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Countless scholars and quite a few amateurs have tried to dissect the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Most do a rotten job. But Paul Kocher actually does it well -- while his essays are a bit outdated, "Master of Middle-Earth : The Fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien" still stand as some of the best interpretations of

Tolkien's work. Kocher tackles such subjects as whether Middle-Earth is really an imaginary world, or one tied closely to reality, followed by a critical look at "The Hobbit" and how it related -- or doesn't -- to "Lord of the Rings." One of the most intriguing essays in here is "Cosmic Order," a look at how Tolkien portrays free will, predestination and fate, followed by a study of how Tolkien writes Sauron and the other evil creatures of Middle-Earth, such as orcs (which Kocher thinks are trained to be evil) and barrow wights. Kocher then does a 180 and looks at the free peoples of Middle-Earth, and the importance of each race. A careful study of Aragorn follows, tracing the uncrowned king's subtle development over the entire trilogy and studying his status as a hero. As a grand finale, Kocher examines various short works that Tolkien wrote or translated, including the lesser known creations like "Imram." Most people who analyze "Lord of the Rings" end up like that guy in Nabokov's "Pale Fire" -- they see only what they want to see. But Paul H. Kocher, who was a professor at Stanford, does a very good job of analyzing "Lord of the Rings." Certainly nothing has been put out that disproves him. Kocher obviously had a great deal of respect for Tolkien, even speaking with intense scorn about people who dismiss "Lord of the Rings" as "just an adventure story."

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