



How We Became Middle-earth

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Following the release in 2001 of the first film of Peter Jackson's adapted trilogy of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, a wave of 'Ring Fever' swamped the world, with reprints of the novel, guidebooks, Internet sites, memorabilia and toys, video and computer games, location tours and extended DVDs. Taking a Cultural Studies perspective, this collection of essays examines the cultural issues generated by Tolkien's novel and Jackson's films. In particular, by applying a variety of cultural, media and literary theories, the essays in this collection attempt to answer the question: How did we become Middle-earth? Topics covered range from fan culture in an age of IT, globalization, transnational capitalism and consumerism to the local socio-political implications of the Rings tale, and the formation of a Middle-earth in our real (or, as argued by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, our no longer real but hyperreal) world.

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