The forest looms large in medieval imagination, as a host of literary, philosophical and religious texts, along with manuscript illustrations indicate. The forest was a major resource for people in the pre-modern age, but it also represented a significant metaphor for diverse purposes and functions: refuge, maze, threat and retreat from society. Robbers, giants and heroes had their abode in the forest, as is reflected even today in the world of fairy tales. In fact, the modern fascination with the forest has, literally, deep roots in the Middle Ages, which this ecocritical reading will profile.

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