THE MIRROR OF TOLKIEN:

THE NATURAL WORLD IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS AND THE THREAT OF TECHNOCRACY IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH AGES OF MIDDLE EARTH

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of the natural world in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings in which landscape surpasses its traditional role as setting and becomes both the medium and the message of the tale. I suggest that Tolkien's fiction reflects an environmental philosophy which is a reflection of his own personal philosophy and which has yet to be investigated in any depth. The thesis argues that The Lord of the Rings is an environmental work which addresses the problem of our ever-increasing technocratic society of the twentieth century.

Chapter One explores Tolkien's personal devotion to the natural world, particularly to trees, and identifies the importance of this devotion as it is translated into the creation of the secondary world of Middle Earth. I identify a correlation between Middle Earth and our own world, this correlation is vital to the message which The Lord of the Rings embodies and to the premise of this thesis.

Chapter Two addresses the "aliveness" of the natural world in The Lord of the Rings. Plants, stones, animals, and the many races who people Middle Earth -- collectively referred to as the "Free Folk" -- possess an unalienable intrinsic value. Tolkien depicts this aliveness in terms of anthropomorphosis because the natural world is generally held by twentieth-century western thinking to be a resource viewed

solely in terms of its instrumental value to Humans. By attributing human characteristics to various elements of the natural world, Tolkien leads the reader to perceive these elements as alive and to experience a "recovery" of the natural world.

The second chapter goes on to identify the interrelationship of the natural world with the Free Folk. I draw parallels between this interrelationship, vital to the survival of living beings, and the philosophies of coinherence, the person-planetary paradigm, and Taoism. Each of these philosophies stresses the ever-important and undeniable union which exists between all living beings and warns against the refusal to recognise this connection. This intricate network of all living things, secure in neither the Third, nor the Fourth Ages of Middle Earth, is one of the premises of Tolkien's mythology.

Chapter Three identifies the One Ring of Power as an unnatural force which threatens the interrelated, holistic community of living beings of Middle Earth. I suggest that the Ring is a symbol of the technocratic philosophy which Tolkien demonstrates as posing an all-too-real threat to the natural world in the twentieth century and explain that just as the corrupting influence of the Ring could physically and spiritually destroy all natural beings in the Third Age, so too does technocracy threaten the very survial of Humans and the natural world in the Fourth.

In conclusion, this thesis suggests that The Lord of the Rings serves as a guide for Tolkien's readers in the vital decision between

the person-planetary and the technocratic philosophies which we face today. The battle, both physical and metaphorical, between the Free Folk and Sauron represents the dilemma facing Humans in the Fourth Age. The opposing armies in Middle Earth reflect the human battle which is fought within our own psyche, the battle between the holistic, person-planetary lifestyle and the evil, yet ever-attractive, technocratic paradigm. Tolkien gives us the single most important weapon in our battle: the hope which is found in the recovery of the natural world in The Lord of the Rings. He offers a philosophy as one way to end the battle in the human psyche, to give us that harmony within ourselves and with the natural world which we seek. This harmony can be found in the person-planetary lifestyle embodied by the Free Folk of Middle Earth.

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To some people a tree is something so incredibly beautiful that it brings tears to the eyes. To others it is just a green thing that stands in the way.

William Blake

Until mankind can extend the circle of his compassion to include all living things he will never, himself, know peace.

Albert Schweitzer

INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues that the major role played by the natural world in the mythology created by J. R. R. Tolkien, particularly in The Lord of the Rings, is of paramount importance to the environmental message as well as the narrative of the tale. The function of the natural world in Tolkien's work extends beyond its traditional role in literature as setting, it comes to life and acts as various "characters" for several reasons.

First, Tolkien's lifelong love of the natural world, particularly of trees, led him to view them as living beings with their own intrinsic value in whose presence he found joy and whose passing he mourned. Tolkien's sketches and watercolors depicting scenes from his mythology reveal the importance of the natural world not only to Tolkien himself, but also to the essence of his mythology, the natural world of Middle Earth dominates almost every scene. This predominance of nature is also evident in Tolkien's written landscapes where his love and understanding of the natural world are celebrated and embodied in Middle Earth. Through his pictorial and written landscapes, the natural world in Middle Earth occupies a position of prominence in the mythology.

Second, because Tolkien believed in the "aliveness" and intrinsic value of the natural world, it is anthropomorphized[1] in The Lord of the Rings, thus making it come "alive" for the reader. Landscapes of given areas behave in character-like fashion as they respond to moral presences, they flourish and wither according to the influence of moral powers in control and reflect other characters' states of being.

Therefore, the landscapes in Lorien and Mordor reflect the inherent character of their inhabitants, the good of Galadriel and the evil of Sauron. Within these landscapes, specific natural objects are also characterized. Animals are capable of conscious thought and speech, and "inanimate" objects, such as plants and stones, come to life. Perhaps the most prominent example of Tolkien's characterization of natural beings is found in the forests of Middle Earth. Trees play a vital role in the tale, the degree of their anthropomorphosis varies from trees who apparently neither speak nor move, to those who fully interact with other characters.

Third, the morally good characters in The Lord of the Rings are characterized primarily in natural terms. These races, the "Free Folk" (I 367) of Middle Earth, are closely interrelated with one another and with the natural world. Such interrelation is defined as coinherence, in a philosophy propounded by Tolkien's fellow Inkling, Charles Williams. ["The Inklings" was the name attached to "the undetermined and unelected circle of friends who gathered about C. S. L[ewis]" (Inklings 67) and read aloud unpublished works.] Alan R. Drengson's analysis of the person-planetary paradigm can also be used to describe the interrelated, ecosophic beings of Middle Earth. This paradigm, which has some Taoist features, reflects some of the same characteristics of the holistic lifestyle of the Free Folk.

This intricate network of all living things in the tale is threatened by the corrupting influence of Sauron's lost Ring, the One Ring of Power. Although completely evil, the Ring is able to seduce its victims with "lies" (Letters 160); it is an anti-communal, unnatural,

disintegrative force which, despite all appearances, is not exorcized from Middle Earth at the end of the Third Age. Just as evil persists through the First and Second Ages into the Third, so it continues with the "Age of Man",[2] the Fourth Age of Middle Earth. The Ring of Power is a symbol of the evil which tempts Humans in the Fourth Age. The One Ring of Power symbolizes not only the Human quest for power over the natural world, but also the unnatural, mechanistic and, ultimately, destructive means employed to achieve this goal. These technocratic means, identified by Tolkien as "the Machine" (Letters 145), epitomize Sauron's rule. Through the events of The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien shows us that the product of such an obsessive greed as Sauron's is war, destruction of the natural world, and loss of self, spiritually and physically.

With The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien acts as the Mirror of Galadriel for Humans in the Fourth Age. He shows us "things that were, and things that are, the things that yet may be" (I 469). The tale concludes with the "Scouring of the Shire" in order to demonstrate that all Humans must take matters into our own hands if "the Machine" is to be cast down. Tolkien gives us hope as he shows that to adopt the holistic lifestyle of the Free Folk is to reunite us with the natural world, and thus with ourselves.

The following analysis of Tolkien's message in The Lord of the Rings uses the terms "myth," "nature," "mythology" and "technocracy" in specific contexts. To perceive an environmental theme in the mythology of Middle Earth is to fulfill the definition of "myth" by C. S. Lewis,

Tolkien's close friend and fellow Inkling. Lewis believed that "all great myths" appealed primarily to the imagination and that

> [their] indirect and further appeal to the will and understanding can . . . be diversely interpreted according as the reader is a Christian, a politician, a psycho-analyst, or what not. (Lewis Rehabilitations 29)

The Lord of the Rings has received Christian (Dowie, Urang), political (Plank), and psychoanalytical (O'Neill) interpretations, however, I acknowledge the emphasis placed on environmental issues in the tale, thus recognizing concerns expressed by Tolkien the myth-maker and Tolkien the private citizen.[3] A man ahead of his time, Tolkien was what would be called today a follower of the deep ecology movement, joining those who believe

> that natural objects, animals and plants, have intrinsic value, i.e. that they are good for their own sake. They have their own way, which is to be respected. (Drengson EP 4)

Tolkien cared deeply for the natural world, that is, the actual physical world, untouched by the ordering or civilizing influence of Humans. In this paper, "nature" refers to "the features and products of the earth itself" (OED 42): natural ecosystems, including everything from desert to forest, from plains to mountains, populated with indigenous flora and fauna. By "nature," I also mean "the creative and regulative power" (OED 41) which operates in the earth and which is "the immediate cause of all its phenomena" (OED 42).

In Middle Earth, Tolkien creates such a natural world as the home for what he calls his "mythology." In this paper, Tolkien's "mythology" includes not only the events of The Lord of the Rings, but the whole of Tolkien's creation: from Eru and the creation of Arda, through the First

and Second Ages, as outlined in The Silmarillion and The Book of Lost Tales I and II, and in the Third Age as found in The Lord of the Rings. In an attempt to express his concern for the safety of the natural world, Tolkien has created a prehistory, a foreshadowing of our world. I will show that Tolkien intended our world to be represented by the Fourth Age of Middle Earth, and that the events which occur in the Third Age are a forewarning of that which could happen again in the Fourth.

In the Third Age, the natural world is nearly destroyed as Sauron strives for supremacy over Middle Earth. If his efforts to regain the Ring had been successful, all of the natural beauty of Middle Earth would have been reduced to the waste of Mordor. The land of Mordor is an embodiment of "the technocratic philosophy," which "conceptualizes nature as a resource to be controlled fully for human [or Sauron's] ends and it threatens drastically to alter the integrity of the planet's ecosystems" (SP 1). The aim of a technocratic society

> becomes the control of life by means of management techniques that govern the application of the hardware and processes integral to technology. (SP 227)

"The Machine," Tolkien's symbol for modern life, is similar to such technocracy:

> There is the tragedy and despair of all machinery laid bare. Unlike art which is content to create a new secondary world in the mind, it attempts to actualize desire, and so to create power in this World. (Letters 87)

Sauron's desire to gain ultimate power through the use of engines and towers, which make him indomitable in warfare, and through the use of the Ring, embodies the technocratic aim. The fate of all of Middle Earth, the living land and the Free Folk, depends on the destruction of

the Ring, the ultimate symbol of technocracy. Tolkien's goal in The Lord of the Rings is to make us see our own world afresh, he communicates to the reader that Middle Earth is in as dire danger from Sauron and his Ring of power in the Fourth Age as in the Third.

Tolkien's natural world is the vehicle of his message in The Lord of the Rings, a message which has grown more urgent with each decade since the tale's publication in 1954. That message is a warning and a plea to his fellow inhabitants of Middle Earth, that is, our own world. Tolkien cries for a rejection of the evils embodied in today's technocratic society, and for a call to arms against the products of greed, such as warfare and the exploitation of the environment, exhibited by this society, before the natural world, including Humans, is irrevocably destroyed.

Tolkien was aware of nature's delicate balance and of the threat posed to this harmony by the internal-combustion engine. He believed that to destroy trees, by hewing, asphyxiating, or poisoning through contaminated water sources is to kill living beings which possess their own inherent values. For Humans to kill such living beings, on which our own survival directly depends, is not only to endanger our own physical existence but to endanger our moral health, and our spiritual existence. Therefore, the complaint of Mark Roberts, who feels that Tolkien has created a work which lacks "relevance to the human situation" (458), is perhaps more founded on imperceptive reading than on any fault in Tolkien's writing. What could be more relevant to the human situation than the healthy, integrated continuance of Humans and our environment?

In the Fourth Age we are without magic mirrors or wizards to aid in our battle against the corruptive forces among us. However, Drengson has identified a group of people, which would include Tolkien, whose efforts to alert their fellow members of Middle Earth to the dangers we now face resemble the efforts of the White Council. This group consists of the

> poets and novelists, story tellers and artists who [can] see the implications of the technological practice . . . going on. They [perceive] fairly well what [the] industrial philosophy [is doing] to the rural culture and its values, and how it [is leading] to an urban life cut off from nature, and what this [is doing] to the human psyche. There are both dystopian and utopian writers throughout the last 100 years, but the voices of the dystopians become more and more dominant and insistent as we get well into the 20th century. (Drengson AP 6)

The goal of the White Council was to rally the inhabitants of Middle Earth to achieve the end of Sauron and, therefore, the destruction of the Ring. Tolkien fulfills a similar role as he joins the ranks of the story tellers and artists and alerts us to the evils of the technocratic world in which we live.

CHAPTER ONE

To understand the vital role played by the natural world in the life of J. R. R. Tolkien is to understand the essence of The Lord of the Rings, the product of his life's work and unshakable convictions. Tolkien wrote in the foreword to the tale that "as a guide" in writing the tale he "had only [his] own feelings for what is appealing or moving" (I 10) and that "an author cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience" (I 12), explaining that a "story-germ uses the soil of experience" (I 12) of its author. "Germ," "soil": even in this small metaphor, Tolkien shows that he wrote about that which was important to him: the natural world. Similarly, while explaining that each author's experiences will be unavoidably translated into his or her writings, Tolkien's own experiences temper his choice of metaphor. Tolkien's biographer, Humphrey Carpenter, quotes Tolkien:

> One writes . . . a story not out of the leaves of trees still to be observed, nor by means of botany and soil-science, but it grows like a seed in the dark out of the leaf-mould of the mind: out of all that has been seen or thought or read, that has long ago been forgotten, descending into the deeps. No doubt there is much selection, as with a gardener: what one throws on one's personal compost heap. (Biography 131)

A devout naturalist, Tolkien celebrates, in the creation of Middle Earth, his reverence and concern for the natural world, which plays a significant role in The Lord of the Rings.

Tolkien's respect for the natural world was an early and lasting motivational force in his life. As an adult, Tolkien, who possessed a self-professed "passionate love of growing things" (Letters 212), proclaimed:

> I am (obviously) much in love with plants and above all trees, and have always been, and I find human maltreatment of them as hard to bear as some find ill-treatment of animals. (Letters 220)

This love most likely found its inception in the four years he spent as a child with his mother and brother in Sarehole, a small hamlet near Birmingham. On the developing mind of young Tolkien, these four years firmly impressed the happiness and security afforded by this paradise. During this time, he is described as having an "'almost idolatrous' love of trees and flowers" ("Professor" 40). Even at this early age Tolkien loved to draw his favorite subject; he came to know the botanical details of plants, particularly of trees. However, he was more interested

> in the shape and feel of a plant than in its botanical details. This was especially true of trees. And though he liked drawing trees he liked most of all to be <u>with</u> trees. He would climb them, lean against them, even talk to them. (Biography 30)

In fact, Tolkien was surprised and saddened to find that everyone did not share his love for his surroundings. Carpenter quotes Tolkien who, even as an adult, remembered one incident in particular:

> There was a willow hanging over the mill-pool and I learned to climb it. . . . One day they cut it down. They didn't do anything with it: the log just lay there. I never forgot that. (Biography 30)

So deep was his personal commitment to his beloved trees that it defined the nature of his relationships with his wife and children. In an early poem, something as personal and strong as his devotion to his wife, Edith, was expressed so:

> Lo! young we are and yet have stood
> like planted hearts in the great Sun

> of Love so long (as two fair trees
> in woodland or in open dale
> stand utterly entwined, and breathe
> the airs, and suck the very light
> together) that we have become
> as one, deep-rooted in the soil
> of Life, and tangled in sweet growth
> (Biography 82)

Reminiscences by Tolkien's son, Michael, reveal that the leaf never falls far from the tree:

> From my father I inherited an almost obsessive love of trees: as a small boy I witnessed mass tree-felling for the convenience of the internal-combustion engine. I regarded this as the wanton murder of living beings for very shoddy ends. My father listened seriously to my angry comments and when I asked him to make up a tale in which the trees took a terrible revenge on the machine-lovers he said, "I will write one." I had to wait many years, though not in vain, to read of the revenge of the Ents on the squalid industrialism of Saruman, the traitorous wizard, at Orthanc. (Tolkien, M 654)

So deep was Tolkien's personal commitment to trees that he defined even himself in their terms. After the death of C. S. Lewis, Tolkien wrote to his daughter, Priscilla, describing his feelings of loss: "So far I have felt the normal feelings of a man my age - like an old tree that is losing all its leaves one by one. this feels like an axe-blow near the roots" (Biography 243).

But Lewis, who himself had declared of Progress that "humanity has been making some big mistake" (qt. in Inklings 183), did not share to the same extreme Tolkien's personal appreciation of the natural world. Tolkien's walking tour in 1947 with Lewis and his brother, Warnie, met with different responses from each of the holidayers. Whereas "Tollers," as they called him, referred to the Lewis brothers as "ruthless walkers," Tolkien's frequent stops to enjoy botanical details

of the area irritated Lewis. An excerpt from Warnie's diary amusingly illustrates such different interests:

> From time to time I contrasted this holiday with the Hugo [Dyson] one, and was struck with the diversity of taste and interest we have in the Inklings. particularly when Tollers stopped one day and gave us a talk on the formation of the Spanish chestnut at the identical spot which prompted Hugo to tell us of the scandalous circumstances under which the late Earl Beauchamp was ordered out of England by George V. (Inklings 210-11)

Unfortunately, not all of Tolkien's critics have responded with such good humored tolerance for his passion. Some have had a more hostile intent, accusing Tolkien of being a "modern rurophile" and making him out to be little better than Sauron. L. Sprague de Camp misinterprets Tolkien's ethics completely:

> To abolish modern machinery . . . would mean that the world could support only a fraction of its present population. The rurophiles do not say what to do with the rest. Let them starve? Shoot them? (225)

Tolkien's desire was to stop any further destruction, this desire differs greatly from de Camp's allegations which illustrate the kind of thinking to which Tolkien was opposed. Such thinking embodies Tolkien's theory about the coldness of "the Machine":

> By [the Machine] I intend all use of external plans or devices (apparatus) instead of development of the inherent inner powers or talents - or even the use of these talents with the corrupted motive of dominating: bulldozing the real world, or coercing other wills. (Letters 145-46)

Tolkien thus rebuked an interviewer who asked what made him "tick" (Letters 217): "I don't tick. I am not a machine. (If I did tick, I should have no views on it, and you had better ask the winder)" (Letters 218). As were so many of his generation, Tolkien was exposed to the ultimate expression of this "Machine" on the front lines of World War

One Two of his three best friends were killed in The Battle of Somme in 1916.[4] Tolkien was devastated by the loss and it was many years before he again found himself in a friendship which was as intellectually and emotionally fulfilling.

During his time served on the front lines, Tolkien saw the wanton murder of many other good men whom he held in high regard. The horrors of trench warfare are well known: the chaos and hellish conditions of the trenches, the scene of total destruction in the no-man's-land beyond, men once strong of limb reduced to decaying husks, farmland once rich and bountiful reduced to mud where no living thing, neither plant, nor man, could survive. To be exposed to such destruction is to remember it for life, Tolkien called it the "animal horror" of trench warfare (Letters 72). When his son, Christopher, was stationed in South Africa during the Second World War, Tolkien directly applied the symbol of the Machine to the terrors of war:

> Well the first War of the Machines seems to be drawing to its final inconclusive chapter - leaving, alas, everyone the poorer, many bereaved or maimed and millions dead, and only one thing triumphant: the Machines. As the servants of the Machines are becoming a privileged class, the Machines are going to be enormously more powerful. What's their next move? (Letters 111)

Such destruction and desolation were most likely precursors to the future creation of Mordor. Lewis declared that the battle scenes in The Lord of the Rings have "the very quality of the war my generation knew" ("The Dethronement of Power" 1373). In Mordor, Sam and Frodo creep from crater to crater across the "tormented" (III 208) "plains of Gorgoroth . . . pocked with great holes, as if, while it was still a waste of soft mud, it had been smitten with a shower of bolts and huge slingstones"

(III 253-54). Surely in this scene we relive "Tolkien's own experience of the gradual destruction of life and health as one approached the Western Front in the 1914-18 war, and the desert of shell holes that marked the end of that journey" (Manlove 205). Discussing the tale many years later, Tolkien wrote, "My 'Sam Gamgee' is indeed a reflexion of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war, and recognised as so far superior to myself" (Biography 89). Because, as we shall see, Sam is a character very closely associated with Tolkien's beloved nature, the above quotation bears high praise for the English soldier.

Significantly, much of the mythology from which The Lord of the Rings eventually developed was written during and shortly after Tolkien's involvement in the war. In his legend he was able to create a world where the Sam Gamgees of the world, and even the trees themselves, were able to retaliate and survive against the life-threatening enemy.

Tolkien's abhorrence of the destruction of natural beings persisted long after the war. Oxford, the city which he so loved, became one of the centres of British car manufacturing. He described the "noise, stench, ruthlessness and extravagance of the internal-combustion engine" as something "grim and terrible" (Tree and Leaf 65) from which one must fly. Tolkien failed to understand his sons' "railway-mania", he saw only the noise, dirt and destruction of nature produced by the railway (Biography 120). He maintained that there was no part of England's countryside that had not been defiled by Progress and even if told of such a place, he refused to see it for fear that corruption had crept in even there (Biography 130). Tolkien recorded this concern for nature's

contamination in "The Bovadium Fragments," a parable describing Oxford's destruction by the "motores" whose chaotic presence destroy the people of Oxford and finally themselves (Biography 166).

Yet, despite daily reminders of industrialization's destructive influence, Tolkien maintained a clear vision of the natural world as it was meant to be, his love and understanding of the natural world are revealed in his pictorial renderings of his mythology. Tolkien produced a large number of accomplished drawings and paintings, most of which depict landscapes, particularly trees, rather than figures (Biography 166). These visual depictions of his mythology were "part of his unceasing effort to externalize the images of his imagination" (Tolkien, B 11). Works published in the posthumous collection Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien illustrate the integral role played by the natural world in Tolkien's work.

Tolkien's illustrations allow us to view Middle Earth, both graphically and verbally, through the eyes of its creator, thus we gain a greater understanding about that world. For example, figure 1, "The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring," is a fine example of a chalk drawing by Tolkien. As seen in this illustration, as well as in almost every one included in the collection, the natural world dominates the field of view. Figure 2, for instance, depicts Old Man Willow and stands as testimony to Tolkien's proficiency when his beloved trees are the subject. In this case, the central focus of the work is reflected in its title "Old Man Willow," but in many of Tolkien's works, the title often differs from its central focus. For instance, the title of figure 3 is "Beleg Finds Gwindor in Taur-nu-Fuin," yet the main focus of the

work is clearly the forest. The two small figures are barely visible as they harmonize with the surrounding landscape. Similarly, the title of figure 4 is "Doors of Durin and Moria Gate," yet the Doors occupy only a small portion of the pictorial space which is dominated by the imposing rock face, framed by the Misty Mountains and the dammed stream of Sirannon. "The Hall at Bag-End, Residence of B. Baggins Esquire," figure 5, depicts the use of a natural land form as abode for a natural being. Yet, the sketch is similar to figures 3 and 4, the title differs from the central focus, which is, once again, the natural world: the open front door leads to the tranquil landscape of the Shire.[5]

Whereas figure 6 is not specifically a landscape, the heraldic devices reveal the vital importance of the natural world to the Elves. A "winged sun," a "winged moon with stars," "white stars," the white "flowers of niphredil," "a cornflower pattern" and "the Light of the Trees upon Ezellohar" (Tolkien Pictures): these have all been chosen to symbolize the tribes of the Noldor. Even the harp, device of Finrod Fegalund, belongs indirectly to the natural world. Music flows and is as expressive as water, the latter has been described as "the most expressive element in nature. It responds to every mood from tranquility to turbulence" (Boulet 3). Cannot the same be said of music? The voice of Goldberry is likened to "the song of a glad water flowing down into the night from a bright morning in the hills" (I 169) and in the stream of Nimrodel on the edge of the Golden Wood, the Fellowship hear the "song of the maiden Nimrodel" (I 440): "it seemed to [Frodo] that he would never hear again a running water so beautiful, for ever blending its innumerable notes in an endless changeful music" (I

449). Similarly, in the Caverns of Helm's Deep, Gimli sees and hears "immeasurable halls, filled with an everlasting music of water that tinkles into pools" (II 188). Such is the bond between music and water in Tolkien's mythology. Therefore, Finrod Fegalund's emblem joins the other heraldic devices of the Noldor which reveal an indelible bond between their people and the natural world.

Tolkien also enjoyed creating designs which do not draw directly from his mythology, but rely heavily on the beings and even on the organic rhythms of the natural world. Figures 7 and 8, titled "Trees" and "Flowering Tree with Friezes," once again demonstrate that trees are Tolkien's favorite subject. As seen here, as well as in figures 1, 2 and 3, his drawings of trees vary in "kind, shape and treatment" (Tolkien, B iii), these illustrations show Tolkien's belief in the individuality and inherent value of each tree. Even the patterns in figure 9, which are simply Tolkien's doodles while doing newspaper crossword puzzles, reveal organic patterns. If one's idle sketches do indeed indicate one's personality or subconscious concerns, then the rhythmic, curvilinear patterns resembling plant forms are further evidence of the importance of the natural world to the artist and of his ability to successfully depict the miniscule set against a massive landscape.

Significantly, although he created masterful word pictures of landscapes ravaged by the destructive force of Sauron, it seems Tolkien could not bring himself to depict them visually; not one drawing or painting of Mordor is to be found in the collection. Of course, Tolkien's idea of subcreation did include the portrayal of evil, thus,

in his written depictions he portrays for the mind's eye a clear image of the no-man's-land within and surrounding Mordor which is the direct result of the evil of Sauron. However, because Tolkien sketched and painted for his own enjoyment, he tended to depict that which was the most pleasing to him.

The drawings and paintings discussed above are not essential to the mythology's existence because Tolkien's written landscapes, particularly in The Lord of the Rings, allow us to form our own mental images of a scene described, yet, these pictorial works help us understand that Tolkien himself undeniably envisioned his mythology as being firmly set in the natural world. Therefore, the study of his illustrations provides more evidence for the argument that the natural world was important not only to Tolkien himself, but was also vital to the essence of the mythology.

By placing his mythology in the natural world of Middle Earth, Tolkien uses nature simultaneously as the medium and subject of his message. Therefore, when Peter Conrad complains of The Lord of the Rings that "narration [becomes a function] of topography" (408), he fails to comprehend that the very reason for the narration is the topography. The Lord of the Rings exists so that Tolkien may deliver his message of concern for the well-being of Middle Earth. Of course, the tale is not primarily a didactic work, Tolkien's mythology began first as a vehicle for his linguistic creations. However, as he wrote about the Elven language which he created, he set it within a story in which the natural world plays a dominant role. Perhaps with the popularity of The Hobbit, Tolkien saw its "sequel" as a prime

opportunity to express his environmental concerns as well as entertain his newly-found audience with a ripping yarn of adventure. Thus, Tolkien himself declared that he possessed an "instinct . . . to cloak such . . . criticisms of life as he [knew] it, under mythical and legendary dress" (Letters 211) while simultaneously admitting that "most people that have enjoyed The Lord of the Rings have been affected primarily by it as an exciting story, and that is how it was written" (Letters 212).

Tolkien's written depictions of landscapes are as alive and naturalistic as his pictorial renderings. The indelible bond between the natural world and his mythology has existed since the naissance of the mythology itself. At twenty-two, Tolkien wrote a poem which was to be the beginning of his "internal Tree" (Letters 321):

> Earendel sprang up from the Ocean's cup
> In the gloom of the mid-world's rim,
> From the door of Night as a ray of light
> Leapt over the twilight brim,
> And launching his bark like a silver spark
> From the golden-fading sand
> Down the sunlit breath of Day's fiery death
> He sped from Westerland. (Biography 79)

This poem is as much about the sky and the setting sun as it is about Earendil, whom the Valar set in the sky as the Evening Star after his voyage to Valinor (Silmarillion 296-302). As the mythology grew from this point, so too did Arda, which is Elven for "the Earth" (Silmarillion 19).

When Tolkien came to write The Lord of the Rings over twenty years later, the role played by the natural world had grown with the mythology. Arda, or the natural world, plays as important a role in the

written account of the mythology as in his pictorial renderings. Tolkien's written landscapes influence and are influenced by the characters who move through them. According to the moral state of the controlling power of the area, the landscapes fortify or weaken the hearts of travellers within them as they themselves flourish or wither.

Lothlorien is an Elven paradise in which the "quintessential purity" of the natural world is a reflection of the spiritual nature of its inhabitants, while concurrently providing a "'health-giving' experience" (Manlove 167) for the Fellowship. Legolas explains that "there is a secret power here that holds evil from the land" (I 438). That power is the moral goodness of the Lady Galadriel and the Elven ring "Nenya, the Ring of Adamant" (I 473), who make possible the goodness and purity of Lorien. Cerin Amroth, the "great mound, covered with a sward of grass as green as Spring-time in the Elder Days" (I 454), is an example of Elven beauty and virtue. The purity and freshness of this hallowed place are perceived through the wondering eyes of Frodo.

> Frodo stood awhile still lost in wonder. It seemed to him that he had stepped through a high window that looked on a vanished world. A light was upon it for which his language had no name. All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured for ever. He saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as if he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful. In winter here no heart could mourn for summer or for spring. No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lorien there was no stain. (I 455)

Such moral goodness in the land influences the mental and physical well-being of the members of the Fellowship who, during their stay in Lorien, are "healed of hurt and weariness of body" (I 466).

The ruined lands of Mordor stand in stark contrast to such images of light and beauty. The evil essence of Sauron is reflected in the sterile, choked landscape, yet, even here, Tolkien combines his understanding of the natural world with the revealing details perceived by his artist's eye to render some of the most unforgettable landscapes of the tale. The glens of the Morgai beheld by Sam and Frodo show a mastery of conception and execution:

> low scrubby trees lurked and clung, coarse grey grass-tussocks fought with the stones, and withered mosses crawled on them, and everywhere great writhing, tangled brambles sprawled. Some had long stabbing thorns, some hooked barbs that rent like knives. The sullen shrivelled leaves of a past year hung on them, grating and rattling in the sad airs, but their maggot-ridden buds were only just opening. (III 237)

Even more devastating and devastated is the "desolation that lay before Mordor" (II 296):

> Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light. (II 296)

Reference to this area as the "Nomanlands" (I 485) connotes the horrific battlefields of the First World War which bore the same name. Clearly such waste is an external reflection of a spirit twisted, full of hate and beyond redemption, which dominates the land. The effect of such horror on the Hobbits is immediate: "'I feel sick,' said Sam. Frodo did

not speak" (II 297). Even more than the armies of Orcs or the dreaded Nazgul, the landscape through which Frodo and Sam struggle "is Sauron's most powerful weapon" (Sale 234). As they continue their desperate journey into the ruined lands of Mordor, the Hobbits become more and more oppressed, weary and without hope. "For the hobbits each day, each mile, was more bitter than the one before, as their strength lessened and the land became more evil" (III 255). Similarly, as the army of the West makes its way along the Mountains of Shadow toward the gates of Mordor:

> though they marched in seeming peace, the hearts of all the army, from the highest to the lowest, were downcast, and with every mile that they went north foreboding of evil grew heavier on them . . . so deep the horror that lay on them that some of the host were unmanned, and they could neither walk nor ride further north. (III 193-94)

As long as the Ring remains, such devastation spreads even beyond the borders of Mordor. Though "much evil must befall a country before it wholly forgets the Elves, if once they dwelt there" (I 370), Aragorn discovers that "Hollin is no longer wholesome" (I 372). Similarly, Treebeard laments that though Mordor "is a long way away . . . it seems that the wind is setting East, and the withering of all woods may be drawing near" (II 89). Frodo and Sam come to Ithilien, once "the garden of Gondor" (II 321), which, although still able to support vegetation, is described as "desolate" and "dishevelled." At first glance, the vast array of vegetation seems almost paradisal:

> groves and thickets there were of tamarisk and pungent terebinth, of olive and of bay, and there were junipers and myrtles, and thymes that grew in bushes . . . sages of many kinds . . . and marjorams and new-sprouting parsleys . . . Primeroles and anemones were awake in the filbert-brakes, and

> asphodel and many lily-flowers nodded their half-opened heads in the grass . . . (II 321)

But Tolkien qualifies this lush description and states that "many great trees grew there . . . falling into untended age amid a riot of careless descendants" (II 321). However lush the scene may appear to be, Ithilien does edge Mordor, therefore, the vegetation is tangled and neglected and that which does grow there is symbolically associated with death. According to de Vries' collection of traditional symbols, the tamarisk is "cursed and unlucky because it never bears fruit" (456), terebinth is associated with coffins, gallows, crucifix, funeral pyres and sacrifices (347), juniper, which does not blossom, represents gloomy remembrance (279), myrtle is "connected with the Underworld-Hell" and death (334), sage is strewn on graves (397), marjoram symbolizes grief (313), anemones are "blood-red, short-lived" and represent abandonment, misery, especially over death, and illness (14), lilies are associated with grief, sorrow, funerals and graves (298), and bay, thyme and parsley are all connected with death (37, 466, 358). Conversely, despite the "dread" (II 389) felt at the crossroads by Frodo and Sam, they find hope in the "coronal of silver and gold" (II 390) about the carven head of the fallen king. Tolkien's choice of stonecrop as the enwreathing vegetation is very symbolic, stonecrop can "survive the driest spell" and folklore of western civilization generally holds that

> it protects the house from fire and lightning when it grows on the roof [or pate?!], it scares off witches and has curative powers. (de Vries 445)

There is no direct evidence that Tolkien was aware of these symbols, however, Tolkien carefully researched the details of the tale (i.e.

Letters 74), was an avid gardener and was well-versed in medieval literature which was itself highly symbolic.

As long as the Elven rings remain concealed and Sauron possesses not his, Sauron's morally evil and destructive force will be held at bay, at least by the Elven strongholds of Lothlorien and Rivendell. From the flet on Cerin Amroth, Frodo perceives the struggle between the light and dark forces: "the sun that lay on Lothlorien had no power to enlighten the shadow of that distant height" (I 456). But for how long?

Light and shadow in the natural world are used throughout the tale to indicate the presiding moral power in an area. In the Elven haven of Rivendell, the mere utterance of the black language is enough to cause a shadow "to pass over the high sun," causing "the porch for a moment [to grow] dark" (I 333). Hope for victory by the defenders of Helm's Deep seems unlikely as the "dark tide" (II 169) attacks when the sky is "utterly dark" (II 168). Similarly, the onslaught of Sauron's forces is described as a "storm" (II 143, 379) and the morning of no dawn occurs when the Dark Lord appears to be at his strongest. In a letter written to Christopher during the war, Tolkien clearly defines the significance of this storm and its accompanying shadow:

> I sometimes feel appalled at the thought of the sum total of human misery all over the world at the present moment: the millions parted, fretting, wasting in unprofitable days - quite apart from torture, pain, death, bereavement, injustice. If anguish were visible, almost the whole of this benighted planet would be enveloped in a dense dark vapour, shrouded from the amazed vision of the heavens! (Letters 76)

However, just as the shadow passes in Rivendell, indicating a return to the presiding goodness in the valley, the thunder and lightning over Helm's Deep move on as victory is imminent:

> A keen wind was blowing from the North again. The clouds were torn and drifting, and stars peeped out, and above the hills . . . the westering moon rode (emphasis added) (II 170-71)

After the long darkness over Gondor, the break of day is most uplifting.

> For morning came, morning and a wind from the sea, and darkness was removed, and the hosts of Mordor wailed, and terror took them, and they fled, and died, and the hoofs of wrath rode over them. And then all the host of Rohan burst into song . . . (III 133)

The predominance of the natural world in The Lord of the Rings is such that atmospheric conditions play an important symbolic role. Significantly, the original source of all light, the symbol of all that is good in Middle Earth, is the Two Trees of Valinor.

Middle Earth includes many different ecosystems portrayed so accurately that they find their counterparts in our own world. As Tolkien renders the landscapes of Middle Earth as "character-like" and indeed, "living," he also successfully depicts the link between Middle Earth and our world. Tolkien has "a marked talent for describing landscape . . . he mixes the familiar and the strange in a manner which makes us ready to accept the unfamiliar" (Little 18). Thus, we accept the mallorn, elanor, niphredil (I 454) and hithlain of Lothlorien (I 483), the simbelmyne of Rohan (II 136), the lebethron of Ithilien (II 380), and the athelas or kingsfoil of the North (I 265) and of Gondor (III 165) as readily as we do the willows along the Withywindle or the myriad of vegetation in Ithilien.

The reason for such detail is threefold. First, Tolkien enjoys the natural world for its own sake. His love and understanding of nature, coupled with his artist's eye for detail, foster a faithful rendering of the natural world and help us view our world afresh. Second, Tolkien

ensures that his reader appreciates that Middle Earth is our earth, information vital to the full appreciation of Tolkien's message. Third, he impresses the fact that each of these ecosystems, along with the delicate balance of flora and fauna unique to their areas, is equally threatened by the Ring's corrupting effect on races of both the Third and the Fourth Ages.

This correlation between Middle Earth and our own world was deliberately drawn by Tolkien. As a young man still watching his "internal Tree" (Letters 321) grow, Tolkien's goal was that Middle Earth "be redolent of our 'air' (the clime and soil of the North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe)" (Letters 144). Therefore, in his rendering of the various regions of Middle Earth, an unmistakable bond is found with our own world. That Tolkien intended his readers to make such an equation is clear, after some readers took Middle Earth to be another planet, Tolkien declared:

> Middle-earth is not an imaginary world . . . [it is] the abiding place of Men, the objectively real world, in use specifically opposed to imaginary worlds (as Fairyland) or unseen worlds (as Heaven or Hell). The theatre of my tale is this earth, the one in which we now live, but the historical period is imaginary. (Letters 239)

Yet, few of us meet Elves or Wizards in our daily lives. After the defeat of Sauron, Gandalf explains to Aragorn:

> The Third Age of the world is ended, and the new age is begun . . . . And all the lands that you see, and those that lie round about them, shall be dwellings of Men. For the time comes of the Dominion of Men, and the Elder Kindred shall fade or depart. (III 302)

Even the misguided Saruman recognises that the ages are passing and, with them, certain races:

> The Elder Days are gone. The Middle Days are passing. The Younger Days are beginning. The time of the Elves is over, but our time is at hand: the world of Men . . . (I 339)

Therefore, we now live in the "Age of Man." Elves, Dwarfs and Ents are no longer found in Middle Earth, not because they are imaginary creatures, but because their time in Middle Earth has passed. "The New Age begins," Gandalf tells Treebeard, "and in this age it may well prove that the kingdoms of Men shall outlast you, Fangorn my friend" (III 312). The legends of the first three ages are at once a prehistory and a metaphor of our present world. That metaphor is a warning to care for our world and guard it against the ever-present evil of Morgoth and his servant, Sauron.

The emphasis placed on the realism of Tolkien's depiction of Middle Earth should not be construed as strictly a photographic similitude of our earth's geography. Each landscape created by Tolkien lives beyond its physical characteristics, each is imbued with an individual and unique <u>je ne sais quoi</u>, whether it be the "wholesome air about Hollin" (I 370), the "fell light" (II 291) in the faces of the dead which can seduce one into a dream state in the Dead Marches, or the light about Minas Morgul: "wavering and blowing like a noisome exhalation of decay, a corpse-light, a light that illuminated nothing" (II 392). Perhaps the sleepy description of the valley of the River Withywindle best captures a sense of something other than pure landscape:

> A golden afternoon of late sunshine lay warm and drowsy upon the hidden land between. In the midst of it there wound lazily a dark river of brown water, bordered with ancient willows, arched over with willows, blocked with fallen willows, and flecked with thousands of faded willow-leaves. The air was thick with them, fluttering yellow from the branches, for there was a warm and gentle breeze blowing

> softly in the valley, and the reeds were rustling, and the willow-boughs were creaking. (I 160)

In Frodo's vision on Cerin Amroth, (see page 19, above), Tolkien also paints a landscape in words which not only captures the indefinable, but also "recovers" the natural world for the reader as well as for Frodo. The landscape created in the mind's eye bears at once realistic details and indescribable qualities. This fusion of the substantive and the elusive is one of the qualities which renders Tolkien's landscapes memorable.

Tolkien's landscapes, instilled with such qualities, surpass the strict recording of fact in photographs. Such subtle nuances, almost imperceptible yet omnipresent, are masterfully combined with Tolkien's love of and belief in the "aliveness" of the natural world. Tolkien's identification with the natural world caused him to define his own work in natural terms, his mythology was his "own internal Tree" (Letters 321). He labored over The Lord of the Rings for many years, despairing at one point that his "internal Tree" would never see completion. Thus was born "Leaf by Niggle," the autobiographical parable about an artist's attempt to depict a tree. Tolkien says of the short story that

> in addition to my tree-love . . it arose from my own pre-occupation with The Lord of the Rings, the knowledge that it would be finished in great detail or not at all, and the fear (near certainty) that it would be 'not at all.' (Letters 257)

In the story, the artist, Niggle, like Tolkien, "niggled" over details.

> He used to spend a long time on a single leaf, trying to catch its shape, and its sheen, and the glistening of dewdrops on its edges. Yet he wanted to paint a whole tree, with all of its leaves in the same style, and all of them different. (Tree and Leaf 81)

Tolkien niggled over the details of The Lord of the Rings so that the whole might be as accurate, as true to life as Niggle's tree. After many years of such niggling and infusing his own convictions into the tale, Tolkien's investment in it was so great that he confided to friends: "It is written in my life-blood . . . and I can no other" (Letters 122). His commitment to an accurate portrayal of the natural world in The Lord of the Rings reflects his belief in the nature of mythology: "we make still by the law in which we're made" (Biography 194). Just as Man was originally a natural being in a natural world (i.e. Eden), he will recreate with this image in mind whether it be its affirmation, such as in Lothlorien, or a denial, as with Mordor. Yet, whether this conjured image be positive or negative, Tolkien speaks specifically of the creation of a land. The Lord of the Rings is less about "elves and fays" (Tree and Leaf 16) than it is about a "perilous land" (11) which "holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky, and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone" (16). Middle Earth is such a land.

Yet, the truth of The Lord of the Rings goes beyond the confines of the subcreation of Middle Earth. The tale is indeed "derived from reality" (Tree and Leaf 70). Not only is it an accurate portrayal of the natural world, but it is also a celebration of this world. Tolkien was as devout a Catholic as he was a naturalist; thus, to celebrate the beauty of the natural world and to be concerned for its health was also to celebrate and defend the truth and the glory of God's creation. This concern for the health of the natural world is caused by the threat of industrialization, signified by Sauron and his Ring.

CHAPTER TWO

Tolkien's belief in the "aliveness" and in the instrinsic value of the natural world leads us to accept these qualities within the secondary world of Middle Earth. As he recovers the natural world, Tolkien makes certain natural beings and objects actually "come to life" as he anthropomorphizes plants, animals and even the land itself. These elements of the "living earth" (II 128), together with the "Free Folk" (I 367) of Middle Earth, are bound by their common membership in a tightly-knit community. Whether the philosophy of this community is referred to as coinherence, the person-planetary paradigm, ecophilosophy, or Taoism, its essence is an emphasis on an interrelation with and respect for the natural world. Through The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien offers this philosophy as an alternative to the technocratic paradigm prevalent in this, the Fourth Age of Middle Earth.

Among the many natural beings of Middle Earth, animals are anthropomorphized in the halting words composed by Frodo for Gandalf. Frodo's song tells of the speech of all birds and beasts, who, by their inclusion with the other races cited, appear to join the ranks of the Free Folk of Middle Earth:

> With Dwarf and Hobbit, Elves and Men,
> with mortal and immortal folk,
> with bird on bough and beast in den,
> in their own secret tongues he spoke. (I 467)

When Shadowfax is counted among "the free horses of the earth" (III 120), the echo of Free Folk is heard, thus strengthening the link between all the living beings referred to in Frodo's song.

Elements of Middle Earth itself are also consistently anthropomorphized in the tale. Water and air possess voices that laugh, sing, sigh, and whisper. The voice of the wind also snarls, brings tidings (II 17-18), and is filled with menacing voices (III 15). Even the land comes to life, mountains and hills have heads, shoulders, faces, teeth, arms, fingers, bones, knees, feet and hearts. They can also possess human characteristics, "Cruel Caradhras" (I 369) can be sullen (I 375), and emit "shrill cries, and wild howls of laughter" (I 377). He is consciously unforgiving: "he has more snow yet to fling at us, if we go on" (I 380) says Gimli, his malice is not satisfied until he defeats the Fellowship (I 383). Similarly, as Frodo and Sam climb the stairs of Cirith Ungol:

> The mountains seemed to be trying with their deadly breath to daunt them, to turn them back from the secrets of the high places, or to blow them away into the darkness behind. (II 399)

Granted, writers often apply such descriptive words and phrases to inanimate objects without intending them to be perceived as living beings. However, the regularity with which they occur in the already "living" realm of Middle Earth would indicate that we are to perceive the land itself as alive: variations of the phrase "the living earth" recur throughout the tale.

According to Tolkien, to make something speak is to "give [it] a power, which in our world . . . connotes the possession of a 'soul'" (Letters 191). He unequivocally states that "The Balrog never speaks or makes any vocal sound at all" (Letters 274), although the Balrog is alive, Tolkien's refusal to depict it as a speaking creature denies it a

soul. However, he does grant the land in Middle Earth the power of speech. Legolas tells the Fellowship that he can "hear the stones lament [the Elves who have departed Hollin]" (I 370). Similarly, Gimli hears "the night-speech of plant and stone" (I 438) and Aragorn hears the "dim and confused" "rumour of the earth" (II 28) as the land "[groans] under [the Orcs'] hated feet" (II 28). The fact that the land longs for the morally good Elves, that it groans under the Orcs' hated feet and that it sighs at the passing of Sauron (III 291) implies that the land itself is inherently good. If it is reduced to waste, as it is in Mordor and Isengard, it is as a thrall of Sauron or Saruman, just as an Elf or Hobbit would be.

The anthropomorphosis of rocks and stones is also found not only in the stones carved "in the likeness of men" (III 75) such as the "two great kings of stone" (I 511) and the old stone king at the Crossroads (II 390), but also in Men and other living beings who often take on the likeness of stone. The faces of the Dunedain are "worn like weathered rocks" (III 52) and Ghan-buri-Ghan, "gnarled as an old stone" (III 124), seems to Pippin to be a stone image of the Pukel-men of Dunharrow come to life. As the grey Elven-cloaked travellers make their way home, they appear to wanderers as "figures, carved in stone" (III 319), who later "[fade] into the stones" (III 320). Each of the images, while describing the state of being of the characters, helps to bring stones to life.

Plant and stone are often cited together, implying that one is as alive as the other. For instance, Treebeard is "made of the bones of the earth" (II 107). As the Fellowship floats down the River Anduin,

signs of life on the eastern bank are defined in terms of plant and stone: the Brown Lands are "an unfriendly waste without even a broken tree or a bold stone to relieve the emptiness" (I 494). Natural land formations are described in "living" plant-like images. For instance, in Gimli's defense of the beauty of the Caverns of Helm's Deep, he asks Legolas:

> Do you cut down groves of blossoming trees in the spring-time for firewood? We would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them. (II 189)

Of all the living elements of Middle Earth, Tolkien's characterization of trees is the most creative and extensive. From those trees who appear neither to speak nor move, yet carry great significance, to those who fully interact with other characters, trees play a major, if not central role, in Tolkien's mythology and the message carried within it.

Prior to the First Age, the Two Trees of Valinor were created. Above all else, they are held dear by their creator, "Yavanna, the Giver of Fruits" (Silmarillion 30), who laments them: "Long in the growing, swift shall they be in the felling, and unless they pay toll with fruit upon bough little mourned in their passing"[6] (Silmarillion 52). As beings which are created by a nature spirit and which are the original source of light in Middle Earth, the Two Trees "have most renown" (Silmarillion 43) of all things in the natural world. "About their fate all the tales of the Eldar are woven" (Silmarillion 43). The Two are poisoned by Morgoth who is subsequently pursued to Middle Earth by the Noldor for his theft of the Silmarils, which are the distillations of the Trees and which are prized beyond measure. This

theft and pursuit begin the long history of evil in Middle Earth and the struggle of the Free Folk against it.

Non-moving or speaking trees play roles equally as significant in the Third Age. The first chapter of The Lord of the Rings centers around the image of the "Party Tree" (III 360). It stands "at the head of the chief table" (I 46) of Bilbo and Frodo's birthday banquet, and it is from under its boughs that Bilbo makes his startling disappearance. The Party Tree, which signifies fellowship, feasting, and gift-giving, is one of the victims which falls under the harsh and thoughtless domination of the Shire by Sharkey's men. But after the Scouring of the Shire, the Party Tree is restored by Sam who plants in its place his mallorn seed from Galadriel. Significantly, the new Party Tree is a mallorn. Stephen Walker has noted that:

> The Mallorn preserves the memory of Lorien in the Shire. As shelter, it had protected and housed the Galadrim. It had preserved lembas, way bread, which was wrapped in it. The Mallorn, in preserving way bread, preserves the staff of life, bread, and therefore, life itself. (4)

The new Party Tree represents the return of health, home and life to the Shire which shrugs off the sterile yoke of thralldom borne under Saruman's tyranny.

The importance assigned by Tolkien to the Two Trees and the Party Tree prepares us for the next step taken by Tolkien as he assigns an even greater role to trees in The Lord of the Rings: they become characters who actively participate in the tale's conflict.

In the Old Forest, the Hobbits fall victims to the wiles of a huge willow tree on the bank of the Withywindle. After capturing Merry and Pippin, its "leaves [rustle] and [whisper], but with a sound now of

faint and far-off laughter" (I 163), but when Sam and Frodo set their fire, "the leaves [seem] to hiss above their heads with a sound of pain and anger" (I 164). The Hobbits have met Old Man Willow to whom Tom Bombadil can speak and from whom he can receive a desired response: the release of Merry and Pippin. When Tom tells the Hobbits "tales of . . . the strange creatures of the Forest" (I 178), the characterization of Old Man Willow as a living, thinking being is clear:

> The countless years had filled [him] with pride and rooted wisdom, and with malice . . . his heart was rotten, but his strength was green, and he was cunning, and a master of winds, and his song and thought ran through the woods on both sides of the river. (I 179)

Tom's description of Old Man Willow not only foreshadows similar characters, but also reiterates the heart of Tolkien's message:

> Tom's words laid bare the hearts of trees and their thoughts, which were . . . filled with a hatred of things that go free upon the earth, gnawing, biting, breaking, hacking, burning: destroyers and usurpers. (I 179)

The Old Forest is "a survivor of vast forgotten woods" (I 179) which once stretched from Rohan to the Mountains of Lune (II 84), and is therefore peopled with inhabitants similar to those in Fangorn Forest: the Ents.

Tolkien's triumph in his anthropomorphosis of the natural world lies clearly in the character Treebeard, "the Ent" (II 78). Treebeard and the Ents are "the oldest of living rational creatures" (emphasis added) (Letters 160), they comprise a forest to which the phrase "living tree" is repeatedly applied. Our first quick sight of Treebeard is as an

> old stump of a tree with only two bent branches left almost like the figure of some gnarled old man, standing there, blinking in the morning-light (II 76)

But Treebeard is hardly as immobile as an old stump. Ents are mobile beings who display a wide range of activity. Whereas the old chestnut almost imperceptibly appears to warm its leaves by the fire of Gimli (II 48), the march of the Ents and Huorns to Helm's Deep and Isengard demonstrates their mobility on the grandest scale. But Tolkien quickly expands Treebeard's physical characterization from the equation with an old stump by labelling him directly as "Man-like" (II 77). Treebeard and his kind possess the faculties of memory and conscious thought, those criteria traditionally employed by Humans to place ourselves above what we believe to be lesser beings of the natural world. Even the language of the Ents is a reflection of these qualities. Conscious thought, essential for a being to communicate fully with others, is the basis of "Old Entish," and so of memory itself. The language of the Ents is a verbal record of their memory of the history of Middle Earth. Treebeard tells the Hobbits:

> my name is growing all the time, and I've lived a very long, long time: so <u>my</u> name is like a story. Real names tell you the story of the things they belong to in my language. (II 80)

The tale of the Entwives relies not only on memory, but also on the Ents' ability to love, another human trait. Despite a long separation of time and distance, the Ents maintain a hope that someday they will be reunited with the Entwives, yet that hope is never realized. Throughout the lengthy and detailed eucatastrophe of <u>The Lord of the Rings</u>, the Entwives remain lost, thereby tragically ensuring the eventual demise of

the race. The separation is "tragic" in the true sense of the word, the Ents bring unhappiness upon themselves by their refusal to join the Entwives in their gardens. Tolkien's characterization of the Ents as tragic figures renders them very human indeed, they bring unhappiness and eventual extinction upon themselves by their own conscious choices.

The Ents' attack on Isengard is further evidence of their anthropomorphosis. The might of Saruman is challenged because he represents the opposite of the Ents' own moral beliefs. Treebeard's "deep rumbling noise like a discord on a great organ" indicates his judgement concerning the morality of Orcs and "young Saruman" (II 80). Conversely, because Gandalf "really cares about trees" (II 80), Treebeard holds him to be morally good.

Ents themselves can also be morally good or bad. Treebeard explains the two moral avenues which an Ent can follow:

> I knew some good old willows down the Entwash . . . They were quite hollow . . . but as quiet and sweet-spoken as a young leaf. And then there are some . . . sound as a bell, and bad right through. (II 83)

Old Man Willow is of the type whose "heart [is] rotten" (I 179) in contrast to the wise benevolence of Treebeard, shepherd of trees, friend of Gandalf, protector of the Hobbits. Whereas Old Man Willow would physically devour Merry and Pippin, Treebeard takes them in figuratively, and with hospitality, as opposed to hostility. In so doing, he "[contributes] towards the maturation" (Jeffs 35), both physical and emotional, of the young Hobbits.

During their short stay in Fangorn, the Hobbits develop a healthy respect for the eminence and strength of this ancient and noble race.

The Hobbits' physical growth, with the aid of the Ent-draught, reflects their growth in understanding or appreciation of the aliveness and intrinsic value of the natural world. Whereas Pippin fears the willow-trees outside Tom's house at night (I 175-76), both he and Merry learn in Fangorn to interact confidently with the Ents and Huorns. Merry and Pippin's adventures encourage them to feel that they are more than simply "[pieces] of luggage" (II 53). Their role in the defeat of Saruman is at once insignificant, yet crucial, and their maturation is essential to the victory of the Free Folk over Sauron. Merry's blade helps end the Lord of the Nine Riders and Pippin's quick thinking saves Faramir from a fiery death. Most importantly, they are able to raise the Shire and save their own from the tyranny of Sharkey's men.

Frodo also matures while in a forest. In Lothlorien, he witnesses the beautiful terror which Galadriel would become if she should possess the Ring. With his recognition of the absolute corruption which the Ring represents and fosters, Frodo's commitment to its destruction is secured (Jeffs 35). With a full understanding of the Ring and of his own resolve from this learning experience in the woods, Frodo is properly armed to resist the argument put forward by Boromir on Cerin Amroth and to make the crucial decision to set out for Mordor on his own. Frodo's wisdom has clearly grown, whereas "he has difficulty discerning Strider's character at Bree . . . he very quickly perceives that Boromir has been captured by the Ring" (Barber 47).

Traditionally places of refuge, forests in The Lord of the Rings[7] also offer emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical growth.

Thus, the depiction of Lorien and Fangorn surpasses traditional anthropomorphosis and portrays trees as that which Humans ideally would be but for the corrupting influence of the Ring: wise, nurturing, holistic, natural beings. Treebeard is the epitome of the natural being, the living embodiment of all the trees, "the being who [is] the ultimate expression of Tolkien's love and respect for trees" (Biography 198).

Not surprisingly then, Treebeard vocalizes sentiments dearly held by Tolkien. First, the idea that language is a form of history of its people is as much a conviction of Tolkien the etymologist as it is of Treebeard; "Real names tell you the story of the things they belong to in my language," (emphasis added) (II 80) says Treebeard. The speech of the Ents is not hasty, but long and full of history. As implied in Pippin's description of Treebeard's eyes (II 77), Treebeard's consciousness lives on the surface of green reality but his roots reach deep into history and legend.

The voice of Tolkien and Treebeard are also one when Treebeard declares "Nobody cares for the woods as I care for them" (II 89). As Treebeard mourns trees destroyed wantonly by Saruman and "his foul folk," Tolkien's despair at their loss as beings with intrinsic value is felt:

> Curse him, root and branch! Many of those trees were my friends, creatures I had known from nut and acorn, many had voices of their own that are lost for ever now. And there are wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves. (II 91)

Thus, in Tolkien's mythology, trees receive extensive characterization. Because they were the closest to his heart, Tolkien

cast them as the representatives of his beliefs, his message to Humans in the Fourth Age. Just as the community of Ents rallied to put Saruman down, so must the community of Humans rally together, if we are to defeat the technocracy which threatens us today. The Ents are purposely human-like in appearance, temperament and even morality in order to draw the parallel. Therefore, just as the Hobbits mature in the forests, so we gain a sense of self and direction from Tolkien's trees. His trees signify the natural world with which Humans must interrelate in order to ensure our physical and spiritual well-being.

However important trees may be in Middle Earth, they still remain part of the community of interrelated living beings. Part of this community also includes various races who people Middle Earth. Many are closely related to the natural world, and are characterized as morally good beings. However, the relationships between these races and the natural world do not reduce them to universals or allegories: "the actors are individuals - they each, of course, contain universals, or they would not live at all, but they never represent them as such" (Letters 121). In fact, as Tolkien identifies each of these races with different elements of his beloved nature, he infuses his characters with his love for the natural world and thus renders them as varied and intriguing as the elements of nature which inspired their creation.

Few things rivalled Tolkien's passion for the natural world, but one of these was his study of language. Therefore, when Tolkien places his created language, the raison d'etre of the mythology, with the Elves, it is fitting that they are closely linked with the natural world. Sam observes: "[Elves] seem to belong here [in Lorien] . . .

Whether they've made the land, or the land's made them, it's hard to say" (I 468). So natural are Galadriel and Arwen that they are the embodiments of the Morning and the Evening respectively (III 307). Elrond, the son of Earendil who "was set to sail in the heavens as a star" (III 381), has eyes "grey as a clear evening, and in them [is] a light like the light of stars" (I 297) and he wears "a star upon his forehead" (III 375).

From Tolkien's depiction of the Elves, we can categorize them as a hunting and gathering society as defined by Alan R. Drengson. They possess an "ecological intelligence" (AP 2) in their recognition of

> the intelligence of the whole [natural world] as its Great Spirit [i.e. Iluvatar] and this same intelligence they [see] in all things. Even stones have power, and one can converse with them in a certain kind of way. Learn from them. The animals have much to teach as well. (AP 2)

Thus, Legolas hears the stones' lament in Hollin (I 370), comforts Arod before the Paths of the Dead (III 65), demonstrating "the elvish way with all good beasts" (II 45), and anticipates communing with the Ents (III 314). The Elves' reverence for the natural world, whether it be for the stream of Nimrodel, the mallorn of Lorien, the Ents of Fangorn, the cry of seagulls or, especially, the stars of Elbereth, resembles that of hunting-gathering cultures which

> live by a philosophy that nature knows best and [they] can live best, if [they] study and learn from her. This gives rise to a deep knowledge of the ways of the myriad creatures of nature . . . there [is no] sense that [they] live in conflict with nature, nor that [they try] to impose [their] will on nature to make her conform to [their] ideas of order. (AP 2)

Such a philosophy lies behind Galadriel's gifts to the Fellowship. Each gift bestowed derives its shape or purpose from the natural world

and is given because its natural properties will aid the quest. Each of the Fellowship also receives a supply of lembas, wrapped in mallorn leaves, and an Elven-cloak which enables him to harmonize with the natural world:

> It was hard to say of what colour they were, grey with the hue of twilight under the trees they seemed to be, and yet if they were moved, or set in another light, they were green as shadowed leaves, or brown as fallow fields by night, dusk-silver as water under the stars. (I 481)

These cloaks are physical evidence of the Elves' reverence for the natural world:

> Leaf and branch, water and stone: they have the hue and beauty of all these things under the twilight of Lorien that [they] love, for [they] put the thought of all that [they] love into all that [they] make. (I 481)

Without each of these gifts from the Lady, which draw on their inherent natural properties to protect and nourish the Fellowship, the desperate quest to destroy the Ring would fail.

Elves are the "Folk of the Wood" (III 298) whose havens of healing and safety, Rivendell and Caras Galadhon, "The City of Trees" (I 459), are found within forests. Galadriel's people, "called the Galadhrim, the Tree-people" (I 442), live in trees, building their flets and abiding within the living boughs of the mallorn rather than felling them for timber to construct dwellings on the ground. Most beloved of all trees to the Elves are the Two Trees of Valinor. The Elves revere the stars not only because "their eyes beheld first of all things the stars of heaven [and thus] . . . have ever loved the starlight" (Silmarillion 56), and not only because Earendil is the symbol of hope to all Free Folk of Middle Earth, but also because the stars are the fruit of the

Two Trees. Because Elves possess an inherent light and are the Folk of the Wood, they are akin on two counts to the Two Trees, the original source of light in Valinor and Middle Earth.

Characterized as a race closely associated with trees and stars, Elves are thus associated with primordial nature, with the very archetype of the creative force of nature itself. Unless they are slain or waste away in grief, "the Elves die not till the [natural] world dies" (Silmarillion 48). Says Tolkien himself:

> The doom of the Elves is to be immortal, to love the beauty of the world, to bring it to full flower with their gifts of delicacy and perfection, to last while it lasts, never leaving it even when 'slain,' but returning.
>
> (emphasis added) (Letters 147)

Another race closely associated with the natural world of Middle Earth is Tolkien's own creation: the Woses. These "Wild Men of the Woods" are "wild and wary as the beasts" (III 123). In fact, these strange small men may represent the anthropomorphosis of nature as much as the Ents do. While the Ents take on human characteristics, the Woses take on those of animals. Ghan-buri-Ghan equates himself with beasts (III 125, 126), is "woodcrafty beyond compare" (III 124), and when the wind changes, "he [stands] looking up like some startled woodland animal snuffling a strange air" (III 128).

The great race of Wizards may appear to differ greatly from the simplistic Woses, yet they share a deep affiliation with the natural world. As a Wizard fallen from his original purpose, Saruman loses any natural qualities he once possessed. The more he is corrupted by his lust for the Ring, the less Isengard resembles the neighboring fields of Rohan and the more it looks like the ravaged, mechanized Mordor.

However, Gandalf remains uncorrupted. Not only is he likened to "a wizened tree" (I 429) and described as "the only wizard that really cares about trees" (II 80), which would appear by now to be high praise in Tolkien's reckoning, but he is also associated with the sun. As he speaks to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli in Fangorn:

> a gleam of sun through fleeting clouds fell on his hands, which lay now upturned on his lap; they seemed to be filled with light as a cup is with water . . . he looked up and gazed straight at the sun. (II 126)

To bear gazing straight into the sun is to be of the same mettle as the sun. If to be equated with the sun is to take on the life-giving, nourishing role of the sun in the natural world, then Gandalf's words to Denethor take on even greater meaning than appears on the surface:

> the rule of no realm is mine, neither of Gondor nor any other, great or small. But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail of my task, though Gondor should perish, if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to come. (III 29-30)

To aid him in his assigned task, Gandalf uses natural agents and powers. His "ash-staff" (II 141) is not only one of these natural sources of power, but is also a symbol of the sun, as well as of the Tree of Life, of justice and of magic (de Vries 24). With light which emanates from this staff, Gandalf saves the Fellowship from an icy death in the mountain pass (I 379), guides the Company through Moria (I 403), and saves Faramir and his men from the Nazgul (III 95). Together with Elrond, Gandalf uses another formidable natural power as they loose the River Bruinen onto the Black Riders (I 294). The most prominent of the natural agents employed by Gandalf is his mount, Shadowfax, who is characterized as the incarnation of the wind. "Were the breath of the

West Wind to take a body visible, even so would it appear" (II 159), says Eomer of the great horse.

Tom Bombadil is another being whose presence in the Fourth Age is, like Gandalf's, sadly difficult to find. I say "presence" because Tom and Goldberry are spirits of nature rather than mortal beings. Tom is "the spirit of the (vanishing) Oxford and Berkshire countryside" (Letters 26) and Goldberry "represents the actual seasonal changes in [real river-lands]" (Letters 272). They are the guardians of natural beings but do not own or control them. Whereas Tom may be "Master of wood, water and hill" (I 172), he does not own, nor does he desire to own them, "he would never make any such threat" (Letters 272).

Again the intrinsic value of the natural world is stressed as Goldberry explains to Frodo that, "The trees and the grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves" (I 172). Although Elizabeth Harrod states that "Between them, Tom and Goldberry control the world of undomesticated Nature, the world of instinctive life and growth" (49), it would be more accurate to say that they embody the world of nature, rather than that they "control" it. Tom and Goldberry represent the natural world itself, rather than the forces which control it. The holistic philosophy embodied by the existence of Tom and Goldberry is opposed to the technocratic philosophy of Sauron who would dominate and exploit all of Middle Earth. Tolkien emphasizes this difference:

> [Tom] represents something that I feel important . . . The story is cast in terms of a good side, and a bad side, beauty against ruthless ugliness, tyranny against kingship, moderated freedom with consent against compulsion that has long lost any object save mere power. (Letters 178-79)

Therefore, the power afforded by the Ring is meaningless to Tom, not only does he remain visible when he wears it, but he is able to make it disappear (I 183), so strong is the incorruptible natural life force in him.

Although certain Men in the Third Age do not exhibit as much of an affiliation with the natural world as do Tom and Goldberry, they do more so than their counterparts who exist today. According to Elven legend, Men awoke "at the first rising of the Sun", thus, one of their many names was "the Children of the Sun" (Silmarillion 122). The language of the Rohirrim, the Horse-lords (I 343), "is like to [the] land itself, rich and rolling in part, and else hard and stern as the mountains" (II 136). Oaths are made to land as well as to lord (III 130). As they ride to battle, the strength of the Rohirrim is often expressed in terms of natural power: their attack on the abductors of Merry and Pippin is "like a tide over the flats" (II 63), their departure to meet with the Orcs of Isengard in battle is "like the sudden onset of a great wind" (II 159), and with their arrival at the Battle of Pelennor Fields, they "[roar] like a breaker foaming to the shore" (III 133). The Riders bear "tall spears of ash" (II 35) which by association carry symbolism similar to that of Gandalf's ash staff. These spears do not produce white fire, although "the glint of morning on the tips of their spears [is] like the twinkle of minute stars" (II 33). However, these spears are still instruments of good, their repeated equation with living trees serves to associate the weapons and their Riders with the forces for good in the tale: their spears are "like thickets of new-planted trees" (III 75).

As seen with Gandalf, characters who are enhanced by the sun shining on them are morally good. Certainly the sun shines on any being beneath her on Middle Earth, however, each reacts to her differently. Whereas Orcs and Gollum shun the light of the sun and the Black Riders are more powerful in the black of night, the courage and moral goodness of the Riders of Rohan are celebrated by sunlight: "the sunset [gilds] their spears and helmets, and [glints] in their pale flowing hair" (II 64). This image is strongest as Theoden rides into battle:

> His golden shield was uncovered, and lo! it shone like an image of the Sun, and the grass flamed into green about the white feet of his steed. (III 133)

He brings the Rohirrim to the aid of Minas Tirith at the break of day and is thus like the sun, "returning beyond hope" (III 308).

However, of all the Men in The Lord of the Rings, Aragorn receives the greatest natural characterization. His rightful claim to the throne of Gondor is defined by nature itself; he heals with athelas because "The hands of the king are the hands of a healer. And so the rightful king could ever be known" (III 161). Thus, he heals the hurts of the people of the West when he comes to the throne. All that he achieves symbolizes wholeness and rejuvenation: the sword is reforged, the White Tree renewed, victims of the "Black Shadow" (III 161) healed, notably, in the spring; the city repopulated and rebuilt, the throne filled with promise of a fruitful line. Thus, he is called "Envinyatar, the Renewer" (III 164).

Yet, even more than Aragorn or the Elves, the Hobbits are truly the hope of all the living beings of Middle Earth. But for each of the actions of Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin, the quest would have failed and

all of Middle Earth would have fallen under the sway of Sauron. And this hope comes in a natural form. Hobbits are

> entirely without non-human powers, but are represented as being more in touch with 'nature' (the soil and other living things, plants and animals). (Letters 158)

They "love peace and quiet and good tilled earth" (I 17), the Shire being a land where "gardeners are in high honour" (II 362), and they "do not and did not understand or like machines" (I 17). Tolkien also makes particular mention of the Hobbits' "feeling for 'wild creatures'" (Letters 197).

Because Hobbits are akin to the natural world, it is appropriate that the natural world should come to their aid. They are rescued from the clutches of Old Man Willow by Tom, the spirit of nature itself, and they receive natural gifts from allies met in the forests and gardens of Lorien, Fangorn and Ithilien.

The link between Hobbits and forests is to be particularly strong in the tale. Gandalf defines the race as "tough as old tree-roots" (I 75) and Merry and Pippin become somewhat treeish themselves by drinking the Ent-draught which "will keep [them] green and growing for a long, long while" (II 81). Just as the wrath of the Ents is long and slow in coming, but devastating when released (II 126), so too is the wrath of the Hobbits slow to be roused, but fierce when sufficiently challenged (III 137, 347).

Like the other natural beings already examined, Hobbits are associated with light. Frodo carries the light of Earendil's star in his phial, and his mithril-coat has starlike qualities about it:

> It was close-woven of many rings, as supple almost as linen, cold as ice, and harder than steel. It shone like moonlit silver, and was studded with white gems. With it was a belt of pearl and crystal. (I 362)

Just as the ship of Earendil, which bears the light of the Silmaril, is made of mithril, Frodo's mithril-coat protects the Ringbearer, who carries the hope of all the Free Folk. Similarly, Sam weds a flower, Rose, who gives birth to an Elven flower, Elanor, the "sun-star" (III 372). His association with Elves and stars, and thus with hope, is so strong that he has enough hope for both himself and his master. Frodo says, "Lead me! As long as you've got any hope left. Mine is gone" (III 246). As the bearer of the Phial of Galadriel while he is in Mordor, Sam carries the symbol of hope into a land where all hope is lost. But his steadfastness of spirit does not rely entirely on the phial; it comes also from his own "hobbitness." When his beloved master is threatened by the evil Shelob, Sam's "indomitable spirit . . . [sets] its potency in motion [and] the glass [blazes] suddenly like a white torch in his hand" (II 425). So strong is his love for Frodo that his own will can inflame a star.

Even the temptations offered to Sam by the powers of good and evil appeal to the gardener in him. In Lorien, Galadriel's searching look into Sam's eyes offers him "the chance of flying back home to the Shire to a nice little hole with . . . a bit of garden of [his] own" (I 464). When Sam is on the brink of Mordor, the temptation to claim the Ring as his own appeals to his desire to heal the lands destroyed by Sauron.

> And then all the clouds rolled away, and the white sun shone, and at his command the vale of Gorgoroth became a garden of flowers and trees and brought forth fruit. (III 210)

But he is saved by his love for his master and by the knowledge that "one small garden of a free gardener [is] all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm, his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command" (III 210-11). The grand picture offered to him by the Ring is not the way of a gardener, one who nurtures, tends, and cares for the earth. Rather, with his own hands he heals the hurts of the Shire, sharing his gift from Galadriel (III 368-69).

Such are some of the many and diverse races who populate Middle Earth. Tolkien's own definition of his mythology emphasizes its lack of domination by human characters:

> Men came in inevitably, after all the author is a man, and if he has an audience they will be Men and Men must come in to our tales, as such, and not merely transfigured or partially represented as Elves, Dwarfs, Hobbits, etc. But they remain peripheral - late comers, and however growingly important, not principals. (Letters 147)

The role of Men in The Lord of the Rings is, therefore, to integrate with the other natural races of the tale, to act as part of an intricate web of cooperation and mutual respect. The tale depicts at once a unity and a diversity of races, not a Great Chain of Being, in which each race is ranked above or below the next. Rather, all are part of a circular, holistic community in which they are valued equally for their own characteristics, abilities and contributions. At the Council of Elrond, each race contributes information to complete the story told by Gandalf and each has a representing member in the Fellowship. The quest is not the struggle of one character, but has cosmic implications including even the struggles of the Free Folk in the First and Second Ages. Each member of the Fellowship begins the tale alone, unable to destroy the

Ring, but with their union, the desired goal of the quest becomes possible.

Such a community of races integrated with one another and with the natural world can be defined by separate theories which, in The Lord of the Rings speak of the same phenomena. As noted earlier, one is the philosophy of coinherence which found expression in different ways in the writings of the Inklings. Another is the concept of the person-planetary paradigm as described by Drengson[8]. A third is that of Taoist philosophy. Each approach stresses the absolutely undeniable union between Humans and the natural world and warns against the refusal to recognise this connection. Whether or not he is consciously aware of these philosophies, Clyde S. Kilby succinctly characterizes them when he declares, "I believe that the popularity of the Rings is in no small way owing to our need for an entire world rather than an atomized one" (emphasis added) (72).

Of the Inklings, Charles Williams most expressed the philosophy of coinherence in his writings. He believed that everyone in the world is related and belongs to everyone else, that all of creation is connected. Nothing exists outside of Relationship, which is the spiritual principle of existence in the universe; every thought, every action, has infinite repercussions. As a devout Catholic, Tolkien would have believed the philosophy of coinherence, if not because it was propounded by a fellow Inkling, then because it embodies the essence of Christianity.

Such a philosophy is evident in The Lord of the Rings. Each race is associated with the others as well as with the land itself. Aragorn, heir to the throne of Gondor, becomes protector and guide to an unknown

Hobbit. Legolas and Gimli go beyond the quarrel between their races to become the closest of friends. All three turn aside from matters of great import to rescue Merry and Pippin from the Orcs; in turn, the contributions of the Hobbits help to realize the end of Sauron's tyranny. So interrelated are the Elves that:

> There's something of everything [in Rivendell] . . . the Shire and the Golden Wood and Gondor and king's houses and inns and meadows and mountains all mixed. (III 321)

Even the food and drink of the Elves reflect a holistic integrated philosophy as they revitalize the spirit and the will as well as the body. Miruvor strengthens the heart and lifts drowsiness from limbs (I 378) and lembas "[feeds] the will, and [gives] strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind" (III 256), whereas the vile Orc-draught feeds only physical needs (II 58, III 223). In contrast, because Sauron exists outside this circle of interrelationships, he is neither spiritually nor physically whole. His empire ends in chaos and he is eventually reduced to nothingness. Therefore, to negate coinherence is, literally and spiritually, to separate oneself from the very nature of things. To deliberately do this is to alienate oneself from the whole universe of order.

Similar sentiments are expressed by Drengson in his analysis of the person-planetary paradigm. Rather than adhering to the belief, held for centuries by western culture, that the "rightful position of man is to be the ruling creature on this planet, to administer it in the best interest of all the local creatures" (Rogers 75), Drengson recognizes that we cannot totally understand and thus manipulate the natural world:

> ecosystems are more like organisms than machines. The interrelationships between organisms within an ecosystem are not completely specifiable, unlike the case of a machine. There are elements of variability and unpredictability. Various elements of balance are so complexly interrelated that they intersect and double back on themselves, form pyramids in symbiotic complexities that magnify and also minimize effects. (SP 232)

This interrelatedness or coinherence extends beyond the ecoysytem, "the dominant organic paradigm of the person-planetary stresses the interrelatedness of the biosphere" (SP 232).[9]

> From the energy-flows through ecosystems, the pyramid structure of living organisms in terms of population, the networks of food chains, the relationships of neighborhood and territory, the interpenetration of reciprocal awareness in the active responses of sentient beings, the consciously shared ends and purposes in human communities, all of these represent levels of integrated organization within the biosphere. (SP 237)

As part of the ecosystem, Humans today are part of this living body, just as all the races of Middle Earth are part of the intricate web linking themselves to one another and to the natural world. This concept of interrelation is clearly shared by Williams' coinherence theory which also propounds that every action has infinite repercussions. Therefore, just as Tolkien saw industrialization as a threat, not only to Oxford, but to all lands inflicted by it, Drengson explains that "We cannot isolate our actions from the rest of society, nor from the rest of the ecosystem" (SP 232).[10]

Drengson's summary of the person-planetary paradigm in "Shifting Paradigms" can be directly applied to the lifestyle of the Free Folk in <u>The Lord of the Rings</u>:

> internal principles of order and the importance of homeostasis and balanced development; symbiosis and mutual interrelationships, decentralization, diversity and unity,

> spontaneity and order, freedom in community, intrinsic value in being itself, biospheric egalitarianism, human experiences as value-laden, creative, ecologically compatible design of human activities, collective responsibility and the unique value of individuals, personal knowing, intersubjective experience and diverse consciousness, organisms as wholes which interact with other organisms in spheres of interpenetration, the planet as a whole as a living organism (239)

"Internal principles of order" are achieved after Aragorn assumes the throne. His rule advocates a "diversity and unity" where, although the Shire is part of his kingdom, no Man may set foot, just as the Forest of Druadan, also of his kingdom, is given "to Ghan-buri-Ghan and to his folk, to be their own for ever . . . [with] no man [entering] it without their leave" (III 307). "Freedom in community" is embodied in the system of rule in the Shire, where the only political office is that of the Mayor whose chief duty is to preside over banquets and the only peace officers are the shirriffs whose main duties are "more concerned with the strayings of beasts" (I 29) and with "walking round the country and seeing folk, and hearing the news, and knowing where the good beer [is]" (III 341). "Intrinsic value in being itself" exists among the Free Folk even under the threat of Sauron, so with Aragorn's ascension to the throne, it would certainly continue, as would "biospheric egalitarianism." "Collective responsibility and the unique value of individuals" are embodied in the selfless acceptance of the burden of the Ring by Frodo, who represents the common human, and in the loyalty of his fellows of the Company. Already considered at the beginning of this chapter, "The planet as a whole as a living organism" is self-explanatory.

All of the Free Folk of Middle Earth possess an "ecological intelligence" (AP 2). They are all ecosophic beings whose goal embodies the person-planetary paradigm. "Ecosophy" represents:

> a state of ecological wisdom, not just a form of discursive knowing, but a state of harmonious relation with the earth. . . . [it] unites one's smaller self with the larger "Self" of nature and even the ultimate source of nature, the "Grand Ultimate" as it is sometimes called when not personified - God when it is. (RE 1-2)

The unadventurous Hobbits thus grow from their smaller, figuratively myopic selves in their cozy Shire, into farther-seeing, more unified and thus greater selves as they come to understand that they are undeniably part of a larger living world. They leave their "static state" and become part of a great "dynamic aliveness" (RE 2). Frodo's decisions, first to leave the Shire and second to set out for Mordor alone, reflect the ecophilosophical ideal which "involves transcending narrow self-identification to extend one's love to all things and one's self as part of all selves" (RE 2). Frodo's love for Middle Earth and its beings is greater than the fear of danger and death promised by such decisions. The "unifying concept" (RE 3) of ecophilosophy is evident in the Council of Elrond and the subsequent forming of the multiracial Fellowship.

The aspect of ecosophy which bears particular significance to The Lord of the Rings is that

> It is a state in which the other is respected for its intrinsic value, and as such, it is within the circle of love that binds all together as an ongoing creation process. In this respect, then, it is a sacred state. (RE 3)

In Middle Earth, this ongoing creation is embodied in the ever-unfolding Music of the Ainur which created Arda, its races and their history.

Therefore, Middle Earth is a land where the Free Folk live by the tenets of ecophilosophy and seek to achieve a land based on the person-planetary paradigm.

The philosophies of coinherence and of the person-planetary paradigm share their many common features with the teachings of the Tao. Po-Keung Ip explains the interrelatedness of all things:

> Since Tao nourishes, sustains, and transforms beings, a natural relationship is built between them . . . Man, being a member of beings, is without exception internally linked to Tao as well as to everything else. (339)

However, Humans, as part of the Tao, are not a dominant force in it. According to Lao Tzu, the Tao "being all embracing is impartial . . . in the sense that everything is to be treated on an equal footing" (Ip 339). Gandalf's warning to Theoden suggests in it such a philosophy: "not only the little life of Men is now endangered, but the life also of those things which you have deemed the matter of legends" (II 191). Drengson explains the danger of deviating from Taoist philosophy:

> The trouble begins when we start to separate ourselves from [the great natural] order. We do this first by passing judgments which attempt to elevate ourselves over other beings. The human impulse to manage the world is an expression of the judgement that we know best how the natural world should run. Ironically, we find every day that we do not know enough, and probably never will know enough, to prevent the unfortunate consequences of attempting to manage too much. (SP 233)

The Inklings reflect similar beliefs in their writings. In accordance with his belief in coinherence, Williams believed that to separate oneself from Relationship is to remove oneself from the whole universe of order. Tolkien recognised that in its pursuit of industrialization, modern society is in danger of becoming alienated from the natural

world. Therefore, in The Lord of the Rings, he illustrates the choice facing us all, to be as those characters in tune with the interrelationships of the living world, or to be as those who attempt to elevate themselves above other beings and, as a result, eventually to cease to exist within the realm of this world.

Within Philosophical Taoism, the intrinsic value of all living things is respected. Conversely, in technocratic society, they are considered solely on the basis of their instrumental value or resources. Unable to see the forest for the timber, Humans today have deemed it more economical to harvest via clearcut a stand of trees than to leave the ecosystem intact for the sake of "Aesthetic values, species values, recreational [or] habitat . . values" (SP 235). The use of trees by Saruman and Sauron resembles that of technocratic society. Saruman allows his Orcs to wantonly hew Treebeard's people and Sauron's domination of a land means almost certain death for any green living thing. Both tyrants also turn trees to their own destructive purposes. The forces of Isengard attack Helm's Deep with "two trunks of mighty trees" (II 169) used as battering rams. Grond, the great battering ram of the forces of Mordor, is fashioned after a "great forest-tree" (III 119).

The attitudes held by the Free Folk toward trees, as toward all forms of life, differ vastly. The instrinsic value of trees is recognized by Elves, Hobbits, and Men alike. While praising Tolkien's creative abilities displayed in The Lord of the Rings, Lewis (unknowingly?) acknowledges this intrinsic value of all naturalistic characters in the tale when he declares that "no individual, and no

species, seems to exist only for the sake of the plot. All exist in their own right" ("The Dethronement of Power" 1373). Yavanna, creator of all living beings of Middle Earth, says "All have their worth . . . and each contributes to the worth of the others" (Silmarillion 52). Even the "kelvar"[11] and "olvar"[12] "would have worth if no Children [i.e. Elves and Men] were to come" (Silmarillion 51). Indeed, in reading The Lord of the Rings, we must "take [our] delight in things for themselves without reference to [ourselves]" (emphasis added) (Letters 179). Therefore, because Gandalf believes (and teaches Frodo) that Gollum has as much right to life as does any other creature, they do not take his life for his crimes.

Tolkien's solution to the threat of the Ring is a philosophy which shares the tenets of coinherence, the person-planetary paradigm, ecophilosophy, and the Tao: each philosophy emphasizes interrelation or holism. Gandalf knows that "things are now moving which will require the union of all our strength" (I 338). The solution lies not in the actions of one being or race alone, the "Power to defy our Enemy . . . is in the earth itself" (I 348), in the cooperation of all living beings in the biosphere. Therefore, Gandalf promises Theoden that Gondor, Rohan and, by extension, all Free Folk of the West, "do not stand alone" (II 148), that they are "not without allies, even if [Theoden] knows them not" (II 191). Gandalf's promise here is to two races of Men, signifying that Tolkien is speaking directly to his readers. In order for Humans in the Fourth Age to defeat the corruptive force of the Ring, we will have to think holistically, to work with, rather than on behalf of, the natural world.

This chapter's analysis of the anthropomorphosis of the natural world and of the natural characteristics of the various races of Middle Earth is a suitable prelude to a discussion of the philosophy in Tolkien's mythology. Whether this philosophy be labeled coinherence, person-planetary paradigm, ecophilosophy or Taoism, it teaches that all living beings and the living earth are to be perceived as undeniably interrelated. With the network of interrelationships in The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien provides us with a sense of relevance which is most gratifying, particularly in the days of disintegration and disharmony of the Fourth Age. In the next chapter, we will examine the horrible threat posed to the intricate network of all living things by the corrupting influence of the Ring.

CHAPTER THREE

> Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
> Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
> Nine for the Mortal Men doomed to die,
> One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
> In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie,
> One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
> One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.

The epigraph to The Lord of the Rings embodies the tale's conflict: the desire for power by an unnatural force threatens the integrated lifestyles of the natural beings of Middle Earth. Whereas the rings of the Elves, Dwarfs and Men are concerned with the natural world of sky, stone and life, the One Ring, which dwells in "the darkness" where no living thing could thrive, seeks to achieve absolute power: "to rule," to "bind." Tolkien defined the "symbolism of the Ring . . . as the will to mere power . . . seeking to make itself objective by physical force and mechanism, and so inevitably by lies" (emphasis added) (Letters 160).[13] As the tale progresses, the temptation of the Ring's promised power and the devastation it wreaks in the natural world reveal the Ring to be a disruptive, anticommunal force which must be exorcised from Middle Earth. And the Ring's unnatural influence is by no means restricted to the Third Age. All ages are infected by its evil. The Lord of the Rings is a warning to Humans in the Fourth Age to resist succumbing to the tempting Ring of technocracy and assuming power over the natural world. For Humans to continue on our mechanized journey away from the natural, warns Tolkien, is to lose touch with our very selves. This chapter will examine the symbol of the Ring and Tolkien's

use of it to reflect what he saw as the all-important decision facing Humans in the Fourth Age.

As Elrond tells the Council, the "Ruling Ring" is "altogether evil" and "the very desire of it corrupts the heart" (I 350). "Desire" is the key word here, despite its inherently evil nature, the One Ring of Power tempts both good and evil characters alike. To answer the call of the Ring is to succumb to the addictive quality of the Ring. The more one uses it, the more seductive is the desire to use it again, despite its detrimental effects. Thus, Gandalf's initially cryptic words to Frodo are, later, more clearly understood:

> As long as you never used it, I did not think that the Ring would have any lasting effect on you, not for evil, not at any rate for a very long time. (I 90)

Therefore, Gollum, who possesses and uses the Ring for many years, has become addicted to it: "he hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself" (I 83).

This seductive quality is essential to the tale. Yet this all-important characteristic of the Ring has been misunderstood by certain readers. Nancy-Lou Patterson declares that

> evil, when effectively portrayed, sometimes becomes irresistibly attractive - this accusation is often made against Milton's Satan. Of such attraction for evil there is in Tolkien no trace. (24)

Not only is such an attraction for evil most definitely found in The Lord of the Rings, but its existence also reveals the true nature of most of the tale's characters. In order for Frodo's ordeal to be fully appreciated by the reader, the Ring must be attractive as well as entirely evil. Without this appeal, there would be no contest of will

or challenge of self to dispose of the Ring. In this manner, the true strength of the Hobbits is brought to light, although Saruman may be greater than Frodo in terms of wealth and power, Frodo is able to resist the temptation of the Ring longer than the wizard.

The seduction of Saruman the White, once head of the White Council, is slow but successful. His initial desire for "power, power to order all things . . . for that good which only the Wise can see" (I 339) is an early symptom of his corruption. His repetition of the key word "power" is a sign that this is what he seeks more than an order for the good of others. However, his desire denies community with the natural world, the necessity of working together, and respecting the intrinsic value of all living beings. His growing ability to render his own land desolate, and later to destroy the gardens and trees of the Shire are signs of his growing evil. His complete and fatal denial of community is seen in his refusal to "come down" (II 233) from his tower and to join the struggle of the Free Folk against Sauron. Because he denies community, he fails to enchant Theoden, Gandalf and company from his balcony where he attempts to "deal with his victims piecemeal, while others listened" (II 237). Even when given one last chance, Saruman, completely corrupted by his lust for the Ring, chooses emptiness over community, "All my hopes are ruined, but I would not share yours" (III 317), he tells Galadriel. Seduced by the Ring, Saruman embodies qualities of the Ring, he is mechanistic, unwhole and impure: he "has a mind of metal and wheels" (II 90); he believes that "the white light can be broken" (I 339), and he is no longer clothed in white.

Tempting though it may be, the Ring is an altogether evil thing. Its appeal is founded solely on "lies" (Letters 160). For example, the ill-fated Boromir falls under the influence of the Ring and dreams of "all men [flocking] to [his] banner . . . [of] great alliances and glorious victories to be" (I 517), yet his delusion results in his death and the splitting of the Fellowship. He falls victim to the mere promise of the Ring. The Ring offers its victims a vision of unity, when in reality, the use of the Ring brings disorder and confusion. Once borne, the Ring can corrupt the bearer as absolutely as the power promised. The Ring is such a symbol of power that one does not possess it but is possessed by it (I 72), the wearer is rendered an eternal slave to the Ring rather than master of it. Just as Bilbo needs Gandalf's help to leave the Ring behind (I 56-58) and as Gollum "could not get rid of it" (I 83), so too Frodo cannot throw the Ring into the fire, either in the comfort of his own Hobbit hole (I 90) or on the brink of the Cracks of Doom (III 269). Clearly, the Ring's only purpose is "to rule" and to "bind."

The Ring's ability to completely possess its bearer is a reflection of its anticommunal nature. The Ring, which bears "a great part of [Sauron's] former power" (I 78), represents a complete focus of energy on oneself, it is the epitome of consumption. To seek absolute power is to refuse to be part of a whole, to deny fellowship and, as a result, to search constantly but vainly to satisfy only oneself. Thus, the symbol of Sauron is a single eye, homonym of "I" and antonym of "we," of the concept of community, the basic premise of the holistic philosophies discussed in Chapter Two.

Sauron allies himself with no one; "only one hand at a time can wield the One" (I 340). Although he employs Orcs, Wargs, the Southrons and the Corsairs in his quest for domination, the alliance is one of master and slave, rather than a true partnership as exhibited within the ranks of the Free Folk. Because Sauron shares not his power, but rather moves his armies as pieces in a chess game, they also are incomplete, lacking minds or wills of their own. Even his mightiest servant, the Lieutenant of the Tower, is known only as "the Mouth of Sauron," "for he himself [has] forgotten [his own name]" (III 197). When Sauron's attention turns from the battle before the Black Gate to Mt. Doom, his armies waiver and despair, bereft of their motivating force (III 272-73). All are "mindless" (III 274) and thus incomplete without Sauron. Without the strategies of the chess player, the pieces are rendered useless, defenseless. Even the once-great Saruman is a dupe of Sauron's and is used merely as an instrument to further the latter's quest for the domination of Middle Earth (II 199).

However, Sauron's refusal to join himself and to share his power with another is, ironically, the cornerstone of his downfall. When he forges the One Ring, "he let a great part of his own former power pass into it, so that he could rule all the others" (I 78). Therefore, when it is taken from him by Isildur, he suffers a "great weakening of his power" (I 77) and is rendered less than whole. The Ring symbolizes disintegration, not only because it separates Sauron (or any ringbearer) from all other living beings as he seeks to achieve absolute power over them, but also because it is only part of something else itself. Sauron

is spiritually incomplete because a part of himself is lost and because he refuses membership in the community of living beings.

Sauron is even physically depicted as incomplete, having "only four [fingers]" (II 309). He is referred to as a disembodied "Black Hand" (II 305) and repeatedly as a singular Eye, missing its natural mate. This "lidless Eye" (III 136) is incorporeal, it appears in Galadriel's mirror from "emptiness," a "black abyss" (I 472) and, even when fully visible, "the black slit of its pupil [opens] on a pit, a window into nothing" (I 472). Sauron's incorporeal nature is also emphasized by his characterization as the insubstantial "Shadow" (I 78, II 260-61, III 71) and by his death which reveals him to be merely a formless, powerless cloud, easily dispersed by the wind (III 273).

The similar deaths of Saruman and the Lord of the Nazgul also reveal the true nature of the Ring, it strips its victims of their wholeness, making them incomplete without it, ultimately reducing them to shadows, to nothing. As Gandalf warns Frodo: "if [a mortal] often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he <u>fades</u>" (I 72). Therefore, the Ringwraiths, "[shadows] of despair" (III 107, 137), exist merely as spirits, as completely corrupted entities, "shadows under [Sauron's] great Shadow" (I 78). Visible only in their own world of shadows (I 262), the Wraiths are unable to see natural beings except as "shadows [cast] in their minds" (I 255). They do not belong to the natural, material world, unlike natural beings, they pass from Middle Earth leaving behind no corpse.

The Ring's disintegrative power also threatens alliances in the tale. The Ring breeds suspicion, mistrust and infighting among would-be

allies who are working to destroy the cursed heirloom. Says Haldir in the Council of Elrond:

> Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him. (I 451)

Before the Doors of Edoras, Gandalf prevents a quarrel which has its roots in such estrangement, he urges: "We are friends here. Or should be, for the laughter of Mordor will be our only reward if we quarrel" (II 141). In episodes where the Ring is directly involved, alliances are not only threatened, but dissolved momentarily, as friend is disfigured in the eye of friend. In Rivendell, Frodo "[feels] a desire to strike [Bilbo]" who appears as a "little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony groping hands" (I 304). Similarly, in the Tower of Cirith Ungol Frodo's beloved Sam is momentarily transformed into a "leering and pawing" (III 224) Orc.

The disintegrative power of the Ring also hampers Sam and Frodo's voyage into Mordor. As the Ring is carried closer to the fire in which it was forged, the closer the natural character of the Hobbits and the natural world alike are brought to disintegration. The spirits of Sam and Frodo are nearly destroyed as they are put to the ultimate test of will: they are both challenged to part with the Ring. Similarly, the landscape visibly deteriorates as they struggle closer to Mt. Doom. Therefore, the spiritual nature of the Hobbits corresponds to the physical nature of the surrounding landscapes, each decays as the Hobbits travel deeper into Mordor.

Even the structure of the tale itself bears the disintegrative effect of the Ring. When the Fellowship splits at the end of Book Two,

the narrative becomes disjointed. As long as the threat of the Ring prevails, the narrative circles and backtracks as it relates the simultaneous events in the lives of the estranged members of the Fellowship. Once the Ring is destroyed and its unholistic influence removed, the Fellowship is reunited and the narrative backtracking ends. The structure of the tale reflects the presiding moral influence; as goodness and wholeness dominate the end of the tale, the narrative structure is made whole again and the linear narrative is resumed. However, as I will demonstrate below, Middle Earth is never completely free from evil -- the Fellowship soon splits again, this time permanently.

Each of these examples of the Ring's disintegrative qualities reinforces its threat to the holistic lifestyles of the Free Folk of Middle Earth. Because the Ring denies fellowship and community with the natural world, it is, itself, unnatural, destroying even the land itself. Says Treebeard, "if Sauron of old destroyed the gardens [of the Entwives], the Enemy today seems likely to wither all the woods" (II 95). Because Tolkien so loved the natural world, "it is a sign of Sauron's evil that he has power to torture and destroy hills and gardens, and his own land is desolate" (Little 167).

As a result of Sauron's evil, land under the thralldom of Sauron takes on unnatural qualities. The north of Sauron's realm is pitted with "mines and forges" (III 240) and "tunnels and deep armouries" (III 245), it is a "broken" (III 253) land where "the air [seems] almost dead" (III 252). However, his destructive power extends beyond the boundaries of Mordor into the confused tangle of Ithilien, which was

once the Garden of Gondor, and to the pale white flowers growing under the shadow of the Ephel Duath which are

> beautiful and yet horrible of shape, like the demented forms in an uneasy dream, and they gave forth a faint sickening charnel-smell, an odour of rottenness filled the air. (II 392)

As the armies of Sauron advance across Pelennor Fields, they expand his circle of destruction as they "[burn] field and tree" (III 111), build great trenches filled with unnatural fire fed "by art or devilry" (III 111), and drag "huge towers and engines" (III 119). These once-fair fields become a no-man's-land, recalling Tolkien's experience in the First World War.

As Sauron defaces the land, he also deforms other living beings. Frodo explains to Sam that

> The Shadow that bred [Orcs] can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don't think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them . . . (III 227)

Unlike the natural Free Folk examined in Chapter Two, Sauron's servants are consistently described in unnatural terms. Orcs have hard, merciless, clawlike hands with rending nails which grip like iron (II 57, 60) and the army of Orcs which besiege Minas Tirith is "like a foul fungus-growth" (III 111). Not only can the presence of the Nazgul be felt "as a deepening of shadow and a dimming of the sun" (III 194), but the creature which bears the Lord of the Nazgul is also a once natural being warped by the Dark Lord: "neither quill nor feather did it bear, and its vast pinions were as webs of hide between horned fingers, and it stank" (III 135). The Nazgul are the "last untimely brood" of a creature of an older world, "nursed . . . with fell meats" (III 135) by

the Dark Lord. Grond, the great battering ram, is a similar corruption of a once-great living being, fashioned after a "great forest-tree," Grond bears a "hideous head, founded of black steel . . . shaped in the likeness of a ravening wolf, on it spells of ruin [lie]" (III 119). All elements of the natural world, land, beast and plant alike, are threatened, corrupted, or destroyed by Sauron, the epitome of all that is unnatural.

Not only is the natural world physically corrupted, but the spiritual wholeness of characters is also jeopardized by the temptation of the Ring. Destructive to sharing and unity, which are the basis of community, the Ring opposes the holistic philosophies of coinherence, the person-planetary paradigm, ecophilosophy and the Tao. To oppose integration with the natural world is to be unnatural, therefore, the inherent will of the Ring is destructive to all that is natural and good.

Because this evil influence so permeates the tale, how can we be certain that, with the passing of the Ring, all evil also passes from Middle Earth? Certainly, Frodo's selfless quest to destroy the Ring frees Middle Earth from Sauron's immediate oppression. Lulled into a false sense of security, C. N. Manlove has declared that

> Tolkien has left us at the end [of The Lord of the Rings] without any sense of evils that may come. the Dark Lord's removal, we are led to feel, is in some way the finish of evil in Middle Earth. (187)

This generalization reveals that Manlove has misread the tale in two respects.

First, Tolkien does not "leave us at the end," because the end of the tale is not found within the covers of the book. Just as Tolkien himself said that "there is no true end to any fairy tale" (Tree and Leaf 68), he has Sam and Frodo reiterate that "the great tales never end" (II 403). Tolkien reflects Taoist philosophy here, for the Tao, the way of things, is a principle of change: "no state will last forever" (Goodman 79), therefore, the state of peace achieved at the end of The Lord of the Rings, however joyful, is only temporary. Even after the last page of the last chapter of The Lord of the Rings itself, another 182 pages of appendices follow, outlining details of past wars against evil. The existence of the Fourth Age of Middle Earth is further evidence that the story has continued.

Second, because evil still exists in the Fourth Age, "the finish of evil in Middle Earth" with the "Dark Lord's removal" is an illusion. Tolkien, who said of his tale that "there is usually a hang-over especially of evil from one age to another" (Letters 180), held the personal philosophy, which he attributed to his Roman Catholic upbringing, that he

> [did] not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat' - though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpses of final victory. (Letters 255)

In fact, "The New Shadow," intended as a sequel to The Lord of the Rings, but unfinished at the time of Tolkien's death, was intended to outline the return of evil to Middle Earth (Biography 230). Because we are of the Fourth Age, the history of Middle Earth continues, therefore, the victory in the War of the Ring was only a glimpse of the "final

victory" itself. But until that time, Morgoth's progeny will always exist in Middle Earth, as Gandalf warns: "Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again" (I 78).

Not all readers of The Lord of the Rings have made Manlove's error. After reading the completed typescript, Lewis wrote to Tolkien:

> the long coda after the eucatastrophe, whether you intended it or no, has the effect of reminding us that victory is as transitory as conflict, that (as Byron says) 'there's no sterner moralist than pleasure,' and so leaving a final impression of profound melancholy. (Biography 207-8)

Lewis' recognition of the sense of loss, of fading, in the tale, read by some as the condition of Original Sin, can also be interpreted as the natural world's struggle for survival in this increasingly chemical and nuclear-ridden, mechanized world.

This struggle of natural beings with the destructive greed which precipitated the forging of the Ring reaches far back into the history of Middle Earth. With each succeeding age, the number of Men to fall under evil rule increases. In the First Age, Morgoth entices Men into their betrayal at the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, which "neither by wolf, nor by Balrog, nor by Dragon, would Morgoth have achieved his end, but for the treachery of Men" (Silmarillion 232).

Although Morgoth is cast down at the end of the First Age, Sauron, Servant of Morgoth, grows as the new Dark Lord of Middle Earth. Tolkien explains that:

> all through the twilight of the Second Age the Shadow is growing in the East of Middle-earth, spreading its sway more and more over Men - who multiply as the Elves begin to fade. (Letters 151)

Sauron dominates "all the multiplying hordes of Men that have had no contact with the Elves and so indirectly with the true and unfallen Valar and gods" (Letters 153). In the prologue to The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien tells us that Hobbits, who initially dwelt east of the Misty Mountains, "undertook the hard and perilous crossing of the mountains into Eriador" (I 19) as a result of "the multiplying of Men in the land, and of a shadow that fell on the forest, so that it became darkened and its new name was Mirkwood" (I 19). Tolkien's choice of sentence structure here implies that if Men were not directly the cause of the shadow, that their increase in numbers was in some way connected to the growth of evil. Sauron's power in the Second Age grows so great, in fact, that he beguiles even the great Numenorians, and leads them to break the "Ban of the Valar" (III 382). Among those led astray are the Black Numenorians, who worship Sauron and eventually become the terrible Ringwraiths, bearers of the Nine Rings for Mortal Men.

Although Sauron is overthrown at the end of the Second Age by the Last Alliance, his One Ring remains and the Dark Tower is "empty but not destroyed" (Letters 157). His return to Middle Earth in the Third Age is first in the form of the Necromancer, defined by Tolkien as "ever-recurrent evil" (Letters 216). As he regains his power and intensifies his search for the lost Ring, Sauron draws more races of Men under his rule. He commands the Easterlings, the Southrons, the Swertings, "Variags of Khand . . . and out of Far Harad black men like half-trolls with white eyes and red tongues" (III 143), all of whom Tolkien describes as "the welter of men that Sauron has poured into the West" (Letters 104). Therefore, though Sauron is cast down at the end

of the Third Age, he leaves behind him a legacy of millions trained as his disciples who will come to even greater power in the Fourth Age, which is heralded as their own Age, the "Age of Men." Tolkien explains that

> of course the Shadow will rise again . . . but never again . . . will an evil daemon be incarnate as a physical enemy: he will direct Men . . . (Letters 207)

Evil has not been put down, in fact, it is less easily detected because of its lack of one identifiable instigator, thus it enjoys an even stronger foothold.

Therefore, although Tolkien gives us a fleeting glimpse of joy at the end of the Third Age, it remains only a glimpse. Despite the victory of the Free Folk, the days of the Ents are limited and the Elves must either leave Middle Earth or fade. Separated from her brethren and father, Arwen suffers a bitter "parting that should endure beyond the ends of the world" (III 310). Perhaps most ironic of all is that, upon his return home, Frodo not only finds the Shire occupied by Saruman, but even once order is restored, he has little honor in his own country (III 371) and suffers from a wound which "will never really heal" (III 372). If such troubles occur with victory, they can only serve to foreshadow greater ills yet to come.

And the Fourth Age is the time when those greater ills will be realized. Despite the fact that Hobbits and Men worked closely together to achieve the downfall of Sauron, the Halflings now avoid their former comrades "with dismay" (I 17). Tolkien compared the latter with Orcs who, "though horribly corrupted, [are] no more so than many Men to be met today" (Letters 190). He warns that if we completely turn our backs

on the natural world and embrace the philosophy of complete industrialization, then the situation will parallel the significance of Sauron regaining the Ring. Sam knows that if the Ring is found, "ther'll be no more songs" (II 437). His statement reveals Sauron's threat to the entire community of living beings of Middle Earth, because the bond between music and water in Tolkien's mythology is so great (as explained on pages 15 and 16 above), the end of all songs implies an end not only to water, but also to all the interrelated beings of the natural world.

The Ring of Power, portrayed as a highly attractive, yet completely evil, unholistic force threatening the existence of the natural world, thus symbolizes not only the quest for power over the natural world sought by Humans in the Fourth Age, but also the unnatural, mechanistic and, ultimately, destructive techniques and tools we use to achieve our goal through technocracy and its machines. By contrasting the technocratic and the person-planetary lifestyles embodied by Sauron and the Free Folk respectively, Tolkien illustrates the choice immediately before us and demonstrates the consequences of the wrong choice.

But has the choice already been made? One needs no palantir to see that Human lifestyle today advances the destruction of the environment as we pursue economic and technological "progress." This dire situation has led me to draw several inferences from The Lord of the Rings. In the western world, we can no sooner reject benefits afforded by electricity, plastics, the family car and other technological "necessities" of modern life than Saruman, Gollum and Frodo can give up the mere thought of the Ring. Humans are as completely possessed by

technocracy as are the victims of the Ring: as a result, all are rendered less than whole. The Ring and technocracy signify the same thing: the epitome of consumption and power-over control (domination). The increasing use of the internal-combustion engine, despite its known destructive effects on the natural world, is similar to the anticommunal and unnatural negligence of Sauron.

As individuals, companies, and nations pursue their own interests and quest for absolute power, senselessly destroying life and land in the process, we witness a breakdown of relationships, not only within the community of Humans and between ourselves and the natural world, but also an irreversible breakdown of the natural world itself. Filled with chlorofluorocarbons and increasing carbon dioxide build-up, the atmosphere can no longer protect us from ultraviolet rays. Even the earth's largest bodies of water cannot sustain the massive amounts of garbage, sewage and oil dumped into them. Ground water and soil are contaminated by chemicals, nuclear accidents[14] and the products of our throw-away society. The daily extinction of plant and animal species is the result of pollution, elimination of suitable habitats and exploitive, unregulated hunting. Drengson summarizes our plight:

> Our industrial approach has polluted the environment, caused an increasing frequency of cancer and other diseases; it has produced large amounts of unemployment, powerful forms of domination, destruction of wilderness, extinction of species, high levels of violence, and great quantities of banal entertainment that have nothing in them for the mind. (AP 4)

Such devastation in the Fourth Age is paralleled by the unholistic force of the One Ring in the Third.

Thus, the unnatural, mechanistic practices of Sauron and Saruman are a reflection of the effects of industrialization on the natural world in the Fourth Age. From the Garden of Gondor to the Gaffer's "taters" (III 357), entropy is the norm as long as the Ring exists. In fact, the philosophy of industrialism, as Drengson describes it, is shared by the systems of operations employed in both Mordor and Isengard. Drengson outlines the characteristics of industrialism used as a total guiding philosophy for all of life:

> The emphasis is on productivity. The more an individual worker can produce, the better. The result is standardization, mass production, resource exploitation, increasing capitalization, decreasing inputs of labor, and increasing inputs of fossil fuels and other forms of energy. . . . The philosophy of industrialism emphasizes, and by its nature encourages centralization, fragmentation of the work process, specialization, the cult of the expert, hierarchical forms of management, centralization of power, domination and control, and an accumulation of capital. The result of this philosophy has been the growth of megasystems of international finance with banking systems that are highly vulnerable. (AP 5)

"Standardization" and "mass production" are evident in the seemingly endless armies of Orcs, each one as cruel and grotesque as the next. "Resource exploitation" exists on many levels. Saruman's callous use of Ents as fuel for his furnaces demonstrates their exploitation and a disregard for their intrinsic value, as well as his growing need for more fuel. Sauron's slaves are equally expendable:

> Orcs, they were useful slaves, but [Sauron] had them in plenty. If now and again Shelob caught them to stay her appetite, she was welcome: he could spare them. (II 419)

"Increasing inputs of fossil fuels and other forms of energy" is evident in the "smithies . . . great furnaces" (II 198) and endlessly revolving wheels of Isengard and in the new mill in the Shire which is "full o'

wheels and outlandish contraptions" (III 356). The land of Mordor, particularly the Tower of Barad-dur, is a classic example of "centralization" in which "fragmentation of the work process" and "specialization" are evident, disagreements between Orcs of different specializations (III 211-18, 241-42) result in Sam and Frodo's fortuitous escapes. "Hierarchical forms of management" are evident within the ranks of the Orcs and Ringwraiths. "Domination and control" characterize the very basis of Sauron's philosophy, he has created a "megasystem" which is "highly vulnerable" because the success of Mordor relies on the recovery of the One Ring. Thus, the horrors of Isengard, Mordor and the Shire under Sharkey's rule are direct parallels of the philosophy of industry which threatens us today.

Just as the Ring would be used by various characters in the tale to unite the Free Folk of Middle Earth and to defeat Sauron, so too, industrialization was initially embraced by Humans as the solution to many ills. However, just as Saruman has "not much plain courage . . . without a lot of slaves and machines" (II 213-14), Humans today are also addicted to the benefits afforded by the Machine, as applied to everything, despite its accompanying horrific implications. Once seduced by the comfort, wealth and power of the Ring, or products and power of industrialization, we are unable to reject them. Similarly, although certain types of research, such as genetics or nuclear physics, may have provided much needed benefits in the past, Tolkien points out that poisonous gases and explosives are also produced

> things not necessarily evil, but which, things being as they are, and the nature and motives of the economic masters who

> provide all the means for [scientists'] work being as they are, are pretty certain to serve evil ends. (Letters 190)

The fact that such research is even conducted reflects the philosophy long held by modern western civilization that Humans are the rightful masters of the natural world, which we have subjugated to our own purposes and desires for centuries. Particularly with the scientific revolution, the "priority of human domination over the world" (SP 231) has been emphasized as humanism has grown. I use the term "humanism" as does Drengson, to refer

> to that anthropocentric and secular philosophy which accompanied the development of science and technology. It emphasizes that science and technology can solve most human problems . . . that human values alone are important, and that the world is a resource for humanity. (SP 231)

The concept of the natural world derived from such thinking is "patently anti-environmentalistic" (Ip 341). The Human denial that we are only part of the natural world, and the assertion that we are masters of it, is analogous to Sauron or Saruman's belief that they can separate themselves from and control the community of natural beings of Middle Earth.

However, such "arrogance of homocentrism" (SP 233) has led to the unnatural and flawed technocratic paradigm, embodied by Mordor. The failure of Sauron to ally himself with the natural community resembles the idea expressed in Drengson's words:

> Kant echoes the Baconian warning that 'nature is to be commanded only by obeying her.' Civilization cannot exist outside the realm of nature, for natural laws provide the constraints within which society must exist. (SP 231)

Tolkien plainly displays a faith in folk wisdom, "the wisdom of the soil" (Ehling 18), which does not scientifically analyze and take apart

the natural world to discover what makes it "tick." Tolkien observed the assumption prevalent today, "that if a thing can be done, it must be done," of this he plainly declared, "this seems to me wholly false" (Letters 246). His belief is translated in The Lord of the Rings where Gandalf rebukes Saruman for his desire to break the white light, saying that "he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom" (I 339). The Numenorians' attempt to achieve immortality by invading the forbidden lands is a similar parallel, reflecting the human attempt to penetrate the secrets of nature, to proclaim our own consciousness and knowledge as supreme. This message found in Gandalf's words is also conveyed by Drengson who, when discussing appropriate technology, states:

> There is no point in saying if we can do something technically, we ought to do it . . . One can have too much automation, too much technological power, too much production, too much complication . . . (AP 7-8)

Tolkien also calls into question the presumption of genetic researchers who have the ability to probe the secrets of life -- does such probing interfere with an internal code of nature? Tolkien's condemnation of breaking this internal code is clear: "Trolls are only counterfeits, made by the Enemy . . . in mockery of Ents, as Orcs were of Elves" (II 107). He specifically refers to Orcs as "corruptions of the 'human' form seen in Elves and Men" (Letters 274) (emphasis added) implying that to tamper with the life of a natural being is to corrupt and befoul, that being. Clearly, in The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien is addressing issues both significant and controversial in our society, stating that as long as the lust for material wealth and power controls

the natural being in us, and as long as we assume we should be the masters of the natural world, we will continue to turn our Shire into a Mordor. Thus, just as the experience garnered by the Hobbits serves them in their struggle upon returning home, Tolkien encourages us to take the experience gained by reading The Lord of the Rings and to scour our own Shire and selves. The Hobbits are as much heralds or symbols of hope for us as Earendil was for them.

Yet, despite such valiant heralds, the battle in the Fourth Age will not be easily won. At the time of the publication of The Lord of the Rings, society was still reeling from two World Wars and living under the shadow of the threat of a third and presumably final war. Therefore, although Frodo's quest was successful, we cannot complacently assume that his action will also redeem us. Industrialization as it exists today is merely a shadow of the terrifying, ultimate destruction which could actually be unleashed on the natural world. Denethor has seen what could be: "Ash! Ash and smoke blown away on the wind!" (III 151).

Therefore, not to learn from Frodo's example would be a tragic error. Tolkien deliberately concludes The Lord of the Rings, "a study of simple ordinary man" (Letters 159), with "The Scouring of the Shire" in order to emphasize the fact that all Humans must assume personal responsibility for defeating evil, whether it take the form of tree-burning ruffians or air-fouling multinationals. Just as Gollum's escape from the Elves of Mirkwood was essential for the eventual completion of Frodo's task, Saruman's escape from Treebeard is also necessary, not only to the story line of the tale, but also to the

message carried within it. If the Shire itself were not directly threatened by Sharkey's men and machinery, the inhabitants of this quiet land would not be fully aware of the great danger posed by the Ring. Tolkien makes sure that we identify closely with the Hobbits in the tale, therefore, a threat to their home is a threat to our own. Tolkien emphasized this equation when he said[16]

> the spirit of 'Isengard,' if not of Mordor, is of course always cropping up [in England]. The present design of destroying Oxford in order to accommodate motor-cars is a case. (Letters 235)

"The Scouring of the Shire" is a foreshadowing, a warning to his readers in the Fourth Age, to do as Frodo did, to "[liberate] from an evil tyranny . . . all the 'humane'" which he defines as including "all 'speaking creatures'" (Letters 241). Because in Middle Earth plants and stones possess the power of speech as well as animals and the Free Folk, this liberation from the tyranny of the lifeless Machine therefore includes all of the natural world. "The Scouring of the Shire" is a more realistic, less fantastic chapter than the others and so emphasizes the parallel of our world with the Shire. Similarly, it emphasizes Tolkien's message that, just as the Hobbits revolted against the industrialized controlling power which was destroying their land and air, so must we. As if leading the battle himself, Tolkien declared, "I will not bow before the Iron Crown, nor cast my own small golden sceptre down" (Letters 64).

Tolkien bolsters our spirits in the face of the Iron Crown. He does not promise our success, nor does he predict our failure. Just as the Hobbits are responsible for the success or failure of the quest, Tolkien shows us that we are responsible for what happens in the Fourth

Age and that if we accept this responsibility, we can succeed. He gives us the single most important weapon in our battle: the hope which is found in the recovery of the natural world in The Lord of the Rings. Tolkien takes on the role of one of the Maia, whose

> powers are directed primarily to the encouragement of the enemies of evil, to cause them to use their own wits and valour, to unite and endure. (Letters 159)

He shows us that we face a figurative jungle of our own making as we destroy the actual forests, and that we must turn aside from our self-destructive course and return to a more holistic, naturalistic way of life.

Humans must recover the natural side of ourselves, the side which Aragorn represents in the tale. As a child called "Estel," which is Elven for "Hope" (III 416), he was hidden in Rivendell as the hope of his race, just as the White Tree lay secretly in the hills above Minas Tirith. Not only does he marry Arwen Evenstar, granddaughter of Earendil, but Aragorn himself is a descendant of Elendil, son of Earendil, who became "a herald star, and a sign of hope to men" (Lost Tales II 266) when he sailed to the Blessed Realm with the Silmaril on behalf of Elves and Men. In Tolkien's mythology, stars symbolize Man's unity with the natural world. Because Earendil, the Evening Star, is the most loved star of the Free Folk, all stars, by association, stand as a symbol for a Human union with the natural world. Thus, as was Earendil, so is his descendant Aragorn, the "hope" of Humans as we challenge the might of Sauron. Just as the Evening Star is "a distant flame before the Sun" (I 309), so too is Aragorn the hope that comes before the dawn to the Battle of Pelennor Fields.

Therefore do "wise men . . . [watch] the stars" (II 198), for stars are the heralds of hope in The Lord of the Rings. Trapped by Shelob, Frodo "[holds] aloft the Phial of Galadriel," filled with the light of Earendil's star, and "hope [grows] in [his] mind" as the power in the phial kindles (II 413). As "hope unlooked-for" comes to the heart of Eomer with the knowledge that Eowyn lives, "many stars [are] in the sky" (III 163). Even in Mordor

> Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. (III 238)

After Sauron is defeated and the White Tree is found, "all the stars [flower] in the sky" (III 304) at the wedding of Arwen and Aragorn, the living embodiments of the stars in Middle Earth.

Tolkien's message is that as wholeness is achieved in the Third Age, so it can be found in the Fourth. The means to achieve this goal lie within ourselves, but only if we reunite ourselves with the natural world. As already noted, in so doing, the lifestyle we adopt may be called coinherent, person-planetary, ecophilosophic, or Taoist, and if we adopt the basic philosophy embodied by each of these approaches, we can meet and defeat the evil embodied by the Ring.

With this recovery, this "regaining of a clear view" (Tree and Leaf 58) of the natural world, Tolkien offers us a choice. We can choose the single-minded, technocratic way of Sauron and his anonymous Black Riders, or we can choose the way of integration with the natural world, seen afresh in The Lord of the Rings. Frodo's vision of wondrous shapes and colors on Cerin Amroth (I 455) is clearly in contrast to the vision of the Black Riders, who are only able to perceive living beings as

"shapes [which] cast shadows in their minds" (I 255). With The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien has given us a way, a philosophy, to help us make this all-important decision; in many ways the tale embodies the philosophy for which Po-Keung Ip searches:

> We need a philosophy which can break this metaphysical barrier that separates man from his world, one which can reconnect the essential link which has been mistakenly severed for so long between human and nonhuman counterparts. We need a philosophy which can attribute values to nonhuman objects independently of human needs. That is, nonhuman beings should be regarded as having intrinsic values of their own rather than having only extrinsic or instrumental values. Moreover, we also need a philosophy which can tell us that we are part of a universe whose parts mutually nourish, support, and fulfil each other. (342)

In addition to providing us with this much-needed philosophy, Tolkien's recovery of the natural world in The Lord of the Rings also helps to reestablish the human connection, our harmony with ourselves. This recovery, or "remythologizing" (Kilby 80), is done, in part, through Tolkien's choice of the mythic form for his tale. Into such a form an author

> puts more than he knows, what he and his reader could never come by in any other way. Like Sam's calling on Elbereth Gilthoniel during his nearly fatal struggle with Shelob . . . he spoke words that are greater and older than himself. (Kilby 76)

With the mythic form, Tolkien taps the collective unconscious of our culture, the "underlying commonality and unity in what it means to be human" (Goodknight 58), to be a natural being. Humphrey Carpenter reconstructs Tolkien's statement of belief that

> Our myths may be misguided, but they steer however shakily towards the true harbour, while materalistic "progress" leads only to a yawning abyss and the Iron Crown of the power of evil. (Biography 151)

Tolkien recovers our mental and spiritual health by recovering the natural world for us, he recovers it from "the drab blur of triteness or familiarity - from possessiveness" (Tree and Leaf 59) to which it has been relegated. He provides us with a reconnection vital to our spiritual survival, for, "the alienation of man and nature parallels the existential alienation of man from himself" (Wojcik 139). If we are separated from ourselves, we exist in a state of despair.

Such existentialism is emphasized in the twentieth century by industrial and economic progress as well as in the fear, anger and despair caused by wars both metaphorical (the Cold War) and literal (the two World Wars) and the injustice, unrestricted to the twentieth century, of human rights violations. As Humans, we have been severed from the natural side of ourselves, that which provides us with our sense of belonging to a community of ancestors, with an understanding of ourselves, of the meaning of our lives, and of our place within the natural world. To place a high priority on "progress" is to emphasize the future at the expense of the past, and to do so is to lose a sense of history and tradition, as well as a sense of self. Such an emphasis denies the tradition embodied in the songs of the Elves or the language of the Ents, whose very lives embody history itself. Drengson explains that

> under such conditions life begins to seem absurd. There is no sense of direction, no clear sense of the values inherent in deepening awareness and in understanding alternative forms of life. (AP 4)

Just as Saruman becomes a wanderer, homeless and rootless, the technocratic pursuits of Humans also have no direction, the philosophy

of technocracy does not consider sustainable development,[17] but rather exists solely for short-term gain, not considering the effects of its activities on the natural world today or on generations to come.

Such feelings of absurdity and senselessness have not always been the human lot. Certain cultures, which embody the ecophilosophic ideals discussed in Chapter Two, found their sense of belonging and derived their knowledge from the natural world. Their religious beliefs, referred to today as "myths," detail a complex web of interrelations in the world of nature in which Humans play a significant role, yet are only few of many players. Such holistic belief is embodied in the simple eloquence of Rolling Thunder, spiritual leader, philosopher, medicine man and spokesperson for the Cherokee and Shoshone Tribes.

> The earth is a living organism . . . People should treat their own bodies with respect. It's the same thing with the earth. Too many people don't know that when they harm the earth they harm themselves, nor do they realize that when they harm themselves they harm the earth . . . understanding begins with love and respect. It begins with respect for the Great Spirit, and the Great Spirit is the life that is in all things - all creatures and plants and even the rock and the minerals. All things . . . have their own will and their own way and their own purpose, this is what is to be respected. Such respect is not a feeling or an attitude only. It's a way of life. Such respect means that we never stop realizing and never neglect to carry out our obligations to ourselves and our environment. (qt. in Boyd 51-52)

Tolkien's Elves and Hobbits are such people, their indelible links with the natural world, as discussed in Chapter Two, are what give them their meaning in life.

For instance, Sam is one with himself and his world. Though Sam is torn between his love for Frodo and Rosie, Frodo knows that Sam "will be healed. [He is] meant to be solid and whole" (III 373). As Sam heals

the Shire through his connection with the natural world and the Elves, he is also made whole by them. The last words of the tale reveal the truth of Frodo's words, "Well I'm back" (III 378) says Sam, at one with his family of "flowers," his land and himself. However, if we imagine an Elf without his or her forest or a Hobbit without his or her garden, we will likely envision a lifeless, despairing being. The consciousness, the sense of self, of each being draws from the natural world, therefore, Tolkien warns that to deny the vital union of Humans with the natural world is to lose this consciousness, and that as long as we continue to do so, our culture will continue to be unwell.

Judging from the incredible success of The Lord of the Rings, the tale provides us with the kinds of connection and mythology for which so many long. As Tolkien jerks the Hobbits out of their safe complacency, we are also forced to reevaluate our priorities and goals. In The Lord of the Rings, we not only find hope in our cause, but also a means to help promote our ideals.

Because The Lord of the Rings is able to speak to us on such a profound and vital level, it joins the vast body of mythology which articulates the human attempt to understand the world, our place within it and ourselves. It explains the nature of the human dichotomy, the 'Free Folk versus the Ring' conflict within our own nature. It projects our inner conflicts, victories and defeats into a physical, yet mystical, world. The opposing armies in Middle Earth reflect the human battle which is fought within our own psyche, the battle between the holistic, person-planetary lifestyle and the evil, yet ever-attractive, technocratic paradigm. Our discovery that Humans simultaneously possess

these potent forces invokes an awe both terrifying and comforting, which is manifested in our mythology, whether it takes the form of philosophy, religion or literature. Tolkien offers a philosophy as one way to end this battle in the human psyche, to give us that harmony within ourselves and with the natural world which we seek. This harmony can be found in the person-planetary lifestyle embodied by the Free Folk.

Tolkien's expression of his "inner Tree" is, thus, an expression of, in Taoist terms, the Great Tree of which we are all part, and which we must nurture in order to be nurtured. As this Tree is recovered for us by Tolkien, and as the way is shown, the parable of Leaf By Niggle is more fully understood to be an expression of the purpose of The Lord of the Rings.

> Before him stood the Tree, finished. If you could say that of a Tree that was alive, its leaves opening, its branches growing and bending in the wind that Niggle had so often felt or guessed, and had so often failed to catch. He gazed at the Tree, and slowly he lifted his arms and opened them wide. 'It's a gift!' he said. (Tree and Leaf 94)

NOTES

1 The concept of "anthropomorphosis" implies that beings of the natural world are viewed as being alive because they are like humans, defined in human terms. Although Tolkien believed that the natural world is alive in its own right, he anthropomorphized it simply because he was relating his story to humans: "after all the author is a man, and if he has an audience, they will be Men" (Letters 147). Because in our technocratic society the natural world has been viewed as an object to be quantified and exploited, Tolkien cast the natural world in human-like terms in order to convey a sense of aliveness and intrinsic worth, he related the tale in terms to which twentieth century humans, who are often separated from nature, could relate.

2 The use of the terms "Man" and "man" are as Tolkien himself defines them in his letters:

> Men with a capital is, I think, used in text when 'human kind' are specifically intended; and man, men with a minuscule are occasionally and loosely used as 'adult male' and 'people.' (28)

Although I allow the use of such gender specific terminology to stand in quotations and in references to the specific race identified by Tolkien as "Man" up to and including the Third Age in the tale, I use the term "Humans" to refer to the species in the Fourth Age. Also, because he directly labels it so, Tolkien's description of the Fourth Age as the "Age of Man" also stands.

3 Lewis said that "a myth points, for each reader, to the realm he [or she] lives in most. It is a master key, use it on what door you like" ("The Gods Return to Earth" 1082). Environmentalism is my "master key."

4 The four of them had formed the T. C. B. S., the Tea Club, later called the Barrovian Society, which met at Barrow's Stores for tea when Tolkien was attending King Edward's School in Birmingham (Biography 53-54). So important was the group to Tolkien that he once compared it to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (Biography 81).

5 For a view of the Shire in the Fourth Age, one need look no further than "rural England" (Letters 250), particularly "a Warwickshire village of about the period of the Diamond Jubilee" (Letters 230), the area from which the Suffields, Tolkien's maternal relatives, came. Commonly referred to as "leafy" (Massingham xiv, Bradley 206-7, McCulla, n. pag.), the county is known for its "sturdy trees of oak and elm [which] stand tall in hawthorn hedges" (McCulla, n. pag.). These stands are the remnants of the once great Forest of Arden and the Sherwood Forest,

> but the forest no longer makes a great green splash on the map, and though we may look longingly at the fine oaks of Warwickshire there is no longer a Forest of Arden in which to stage outdoor performances of As You Like It. Arden and Sherwood are so closely linked with one of the most vital periods of England's history that their passing, unmourned and almost unnoticed, is rather remarkable. (Stokes 68)

6

Yavanna's lament reflects the question of intrinsic versus instrumental value, discussed later in this chapter.

7

The security of Shakespeare's Arden, the wisdom of Keats' "green-robed senators of mighty woods" and the strength of Chaucer's "byldere ok" embody such diverse forms of growth. The Arden woodland is also historically known to have

> provided a refuge for hunted men and beasts and within Warwickshire folk [such as Tolkien] lies the instinct to protect and preserve the ancient trees and their descendents which happily still shelter the County in places, to form the winding leafy lanes which bind hamlet and village together and so provide the County with its most distinctive feature. (McCulla, n. pag.)

8

By contrasting the teachings of Kant and Hobbes, Drengson identifies the person-planetary philosophy:

> Kant observed, in contrast to Hobbes, that humans are not only self-assertive, self-oriented and anti-social, but they also desire sociability, not simply to be admired personally, but also because they are social beings. Community life is intrinsically valuable to us. It is the dialectical interplay between these conflicting drives that creates society. . . . If Hobbes emphasizes our separateness, Kant emphasizes community. Technocratic philosophy, with Hobbes, regards each of us as separate parts which get their significance only by being related through the state by means of laws externally imposed on us. . . . Person-planetary philosophy, with Kant, regards community as primary. Through its paradigm observer and observed are united in reciprocal processes of interresponsiveness. The boundaries of community extend to include the other beings of our home places. We affect and are affected by this broader community of life. Our societies are living processes within it. The person-planetary paradigm attempts to locate the constraints on human activites in the principles of ecology. (SP 231-32)

9

The complex relationship between the Spotted Owl and its habitat in the temperate rainforest of the Pacific Northwest is testimony to such interrelation as described by Drengson. Chris Maser explains how each action by an organism in the ecosystem affects another:

> The Spotted Owl requires large amounts of dead wood on the ground because the [mycorrhizal] fungus that grows on the dead wood, that nourished the trees, is also the food for the flying squirrel, which is the prey item of the Spotted Owl. So the Spotted Owl requires wood, not just big trees. The Spotted Owl is part of a system. If we draw a line around an ancient forest and say "this is Spotted Owl habitat" and cut everything down surrounding that, we have guaranteed the extinction of both the owl and its habitat.

Maser uses this example from the natural world as a metaphor for the human condition:

> We can take a lesson from the ancient forest. We see the trees standing as individuals, but below ground there is a vast net of mycorrhizal fungi . . . a fungus which nurtures the tree. It gets nutrients from the soil, moves it into the tree, the tree in turn feeds the fungus sugars from its photosynthesis. This fungi forms a net below the whole forest . . . it connects one tree to another. There are billions of miles of gossamer threads of these fungi . . . [the forest] is all connected with a net. We are the same. We appear separate, but our need for love, trust, respect and all the things that give us our humanity is that great mycorrhizal net below ground. That is what gives us our joint share in humanity.

10

Similarly, the major problems which Humans face in the twentieth century (such as hunger, overpopulation, resource depletion, conflict between nations) are all interconnected and interdependent. Yet, "what most of our scientists, politicians, economists, and so on are doing is propose patchwork solutions, propose technological fixes which do not solve any of the problems or apparently they would solve the problem by creating another problem" (Capra). We must recognise that we "cannot

understand [these problems], let alone solve them, in isolation" (Capra).

11 "An Elvish word retained in the speeches of Yavanna and Manwe in [The Silmarillion] 'animals, living things that move'" (405).

12 "An Elvish word retained in the speeches of Yavanna and Manwe in [The Silmarillion], meaning 'growing things with roots in the earth'" (415).

13 Tolkien's association of mechanism with lies, the two cornerstones of Sauron's rule, implies that neither has a place in the holistic, interrelated world of balance embodied by the person-planetary paradigm.

14 For example, "Much of [the radioactivity that escaped from Chernobyl's Number Four reactor] still lies in the water and soil of northern Ukraine and southern Byelorussia" (Haynes 111). Officials are concerned that the annual flooding of rivers will draw the radioactivity from the surrounding contaminated land, concentrating the levels of chemical and radioactive pollution in what are supposed to be drinking water supplies.

15 However, I disagree with Tolkien when he extends this condemnation of technological change to include birth control without which planetary overcrowding would lead to suffering world-wide. The

depletion of resources needed to feed and house the ensuing masses would lead to famine, climatic change, pollution and warfare.

16 Tolkien's reference here is to the proposal for a relief road through Christ Church Meadow. The road was put forward as a "solution to the dual problem of traffic congestion in the centre of Oxford and the restoration of peace and quiet to the heart of the university" ("Oxford"). The proposal sparked a heated dispute which was the subject of city council and parliamentary debates, public inquires, traffic surveys and consultants' reports for over 45 years. Opposition to the scheme eventually won. In 1971, the Secretary of State for the Environment rejected the recommendation that the road be built across the meadow and stated that the meadow has a "unique and irreplaceable character which is of importance far beyond the boundaries of the university or the city" ("Minister").

17

> "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of 'needs,' in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given, and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs." (Brundtland 43)

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APPENDIX

Figure 1: The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring

Figure 2: Old Man Willow

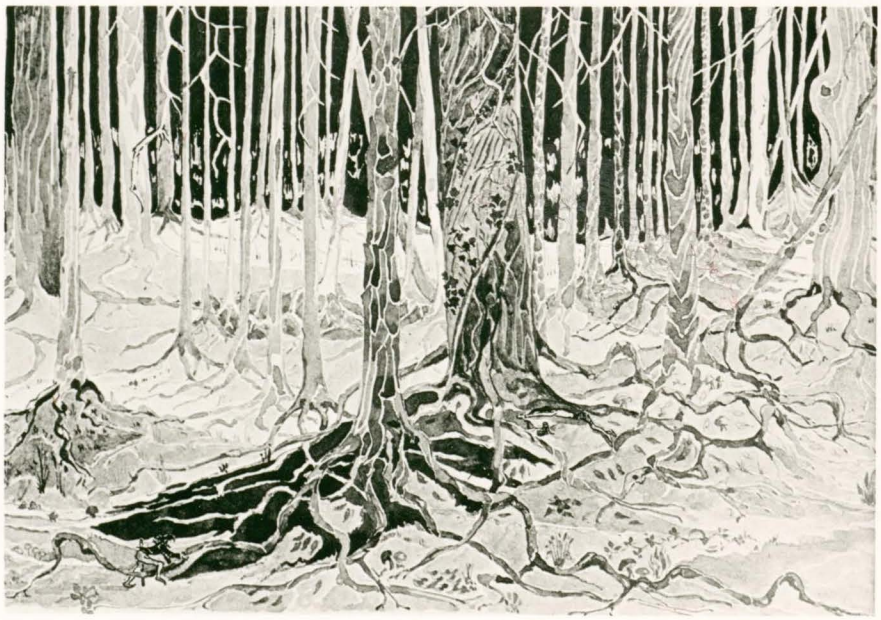

Figure 3: Beleg Finds Gwindor in Taur-nu-Fuin

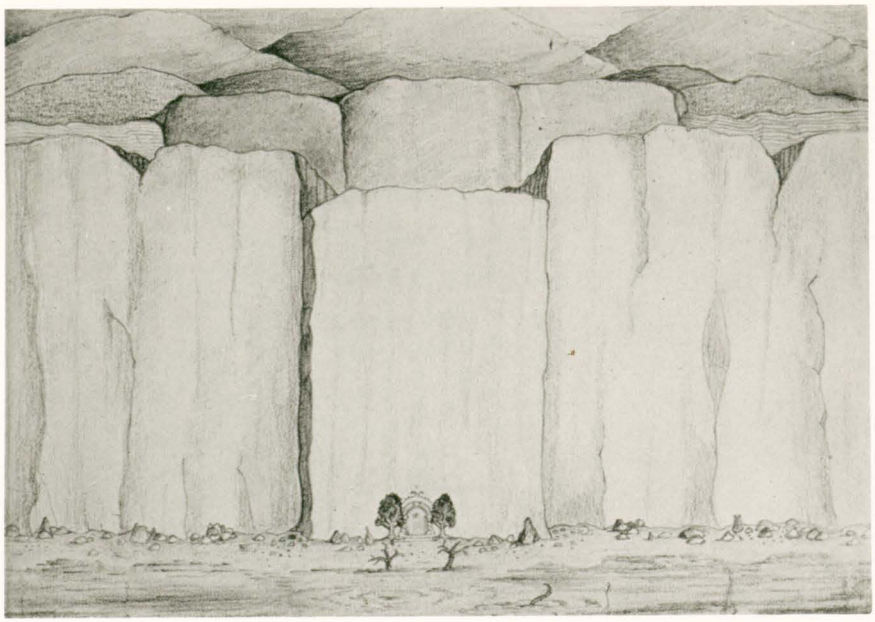

Figure 4: Doors of Durin and Moria Gate

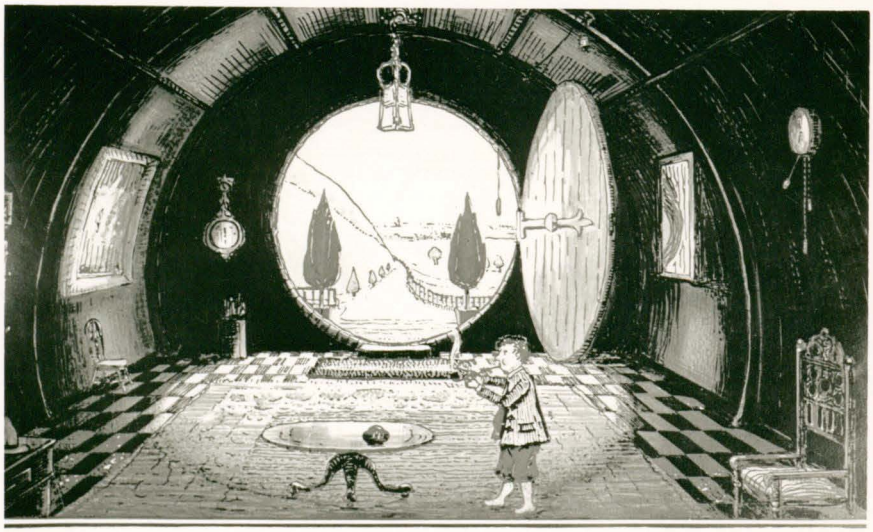

Figure 5: The Hall at Bag-End, Residence of B. Baggins Esquire

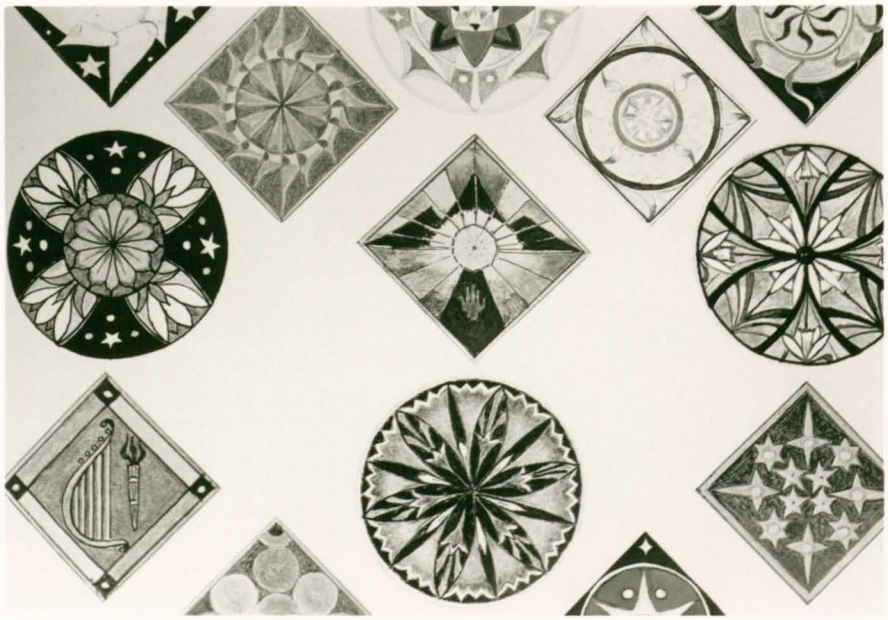

Figure 6: Heraldic Devices

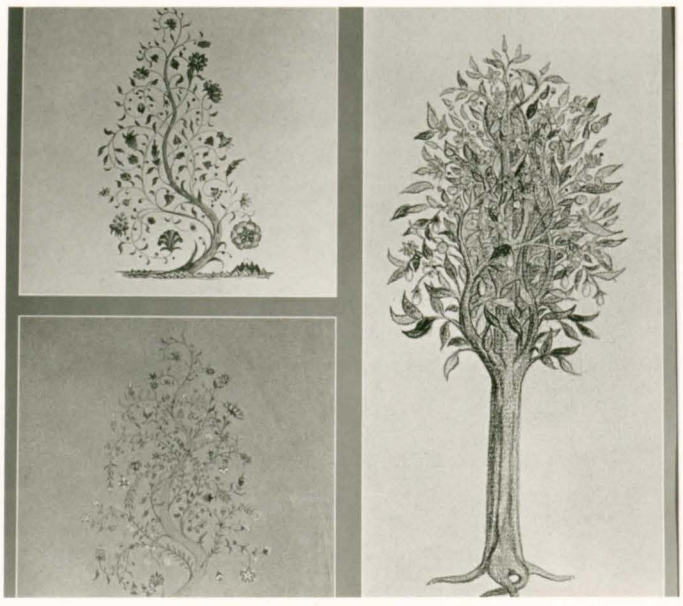

Figure 7: Trees

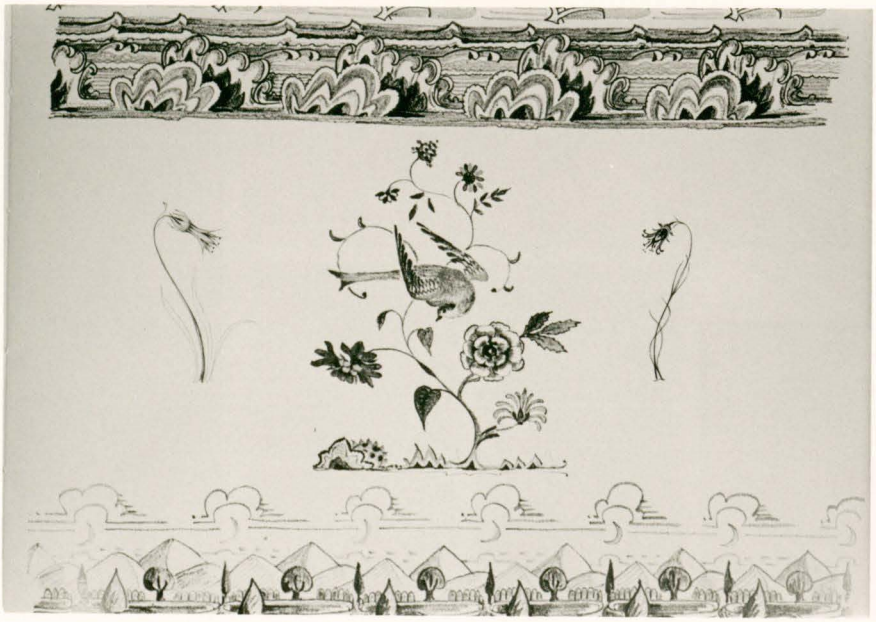

Figure 8: Flowering Tree with Friezes

Figure 9: Patterns (I)

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