

**THE GREEN GOD: ECO-COSMOLOGY IN TOLKIEN'S
MIDDLE-EARTH**

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Elçin PARÇAOĞLU

**Supervisor
Doç. Dr. Şeyda SİVRİOĞLU**

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Signature:

Name, Last Name: Elçin PARÇAOĞLU

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ABSTRACT**THE GREEN GOD: ECO-COSMOLOGY IN TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH**

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This doctoral thesis aims to study the nature-religion relationship in Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus. The idea put forward by this thesis is that nature and religion are an inseparable whole in this corpus. Interdisciplinary ecology studies and religion studies, which are examined to put forward this idea, are used in this study to show how both concepts work together. Both ecological and cosmological analyses of Tolkien's Middle-earth show that these two concepts are inextricably present in Middle-earth mythology. In these analyses, the contribution of Middle-earth's all living/non-living, organic/inorganic, and bodily/non-bodily beings to the cosmos are discussed. During these discussions, while emphasizing the unique features of this cosmogony, it is aimed to identify similar religious systems inspired by the understanding of nature in archaic periods. In addition, the position of nature domination in Middle-earth cosmology is also discussed. Lastly, the traces of the domination of nature in the history of humanity are also aimed to be revealed.

Keywords: J. R. R. Tolkien, mythology, cosmology, ecology, Middle-earth

ÖZET

YEŞİL TANRI: TOLKIEN'İN ORTA-DÜNYA'SINDA EKO-KOZMOLOJİ

Parçaoğlu, Elçin

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Bu doktora tezi Tolkien'in Orta-dünya külliyatında doğa-din ilişkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tezin öne sürdüğü fikir, bu külliyatta doğa ve dinin ayrılmaz bir bütün olduğudur. Bu fikri ortaya koymak için incelenen disiplinler arası ekoloji çalışmaları ve din çalışmaları, bu her iki kavramın birlikte nasıl yol aldığını göstermek için kullanılmıştır. Tolkien'in Orta-dünya'sının hem ekolojik hem de kozmolojik analizleri, bu iki kavramın Orta-dünya mitolojisinde ayrılmaz bir bütün olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu analizlerde Orta-dünya'nın tüm canlı/cansız, organik/inorganik ve bedensel/bedensel olmayan varlıklarının kozmosa katkısı tartışılmaktadır. Bu tartışmalar sırasında bu kozmogoninin kendine has özellikleri vurgulanırken, arkaik dönemlerde doğa anlayışından esinlenerek oluşturulan benzer dini sistemlerin tespit edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, doğa tahakkümünün Orta-dünya kozmolojisindeki konumu da tartışılmaktadır. Son olarak, insanlık tarihindeki doğa tahakkümünün izlerinin de su yüzüne çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: J. R. R. Tolkien, mitoloji, kozmoloji, ekoloji, Orta-dünya

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INTRODUCTION

The English writer J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) and his Middle-earth corpus have become world-renowned, and many studies have been produced in academia, cinema,¹ popular culture,² tourism,³ and art,⁴ fed and influenced by this corpus. Tolkien's legendarium,⁵ which has been studied a lot, especially in the academic communion, has been analysed in many theories and continues to be examined. While there are still many topics and themes to be discussed in a whole corpus, the starting point of this doctoral thesis is the concept of "nature," perhaps one of the most studied and discussed topics in Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus. In the trilogy(ies) directed by Peter Jackson, those increasingly impressed by choice of scenes and landscapes must admit that Tolkien's depiction of nature in his writings is often larger and multi-layered than Jackson can present in the movies.

Clarifying the concept of "nature" mentioned here will be an important issue to comprehend this doctoral thesis' purpose. The term "nature" used here is an umbrella term. It gathers all living/non-living, organic/inorganic, bodily/non-bodily entities in Tolkien's legendarium, from the layers of the atmosphere where the star clusters, the sun, and the moon are located, to the underground sources. In many studies conducted in this context, the "nature" concept in Tolkien's legendarium has been discussed in many ways and analysed in detail. One of these works is the article "Nature" written by Liam Campbell in the book *A Companion to J. R. R. Tolkien* edited by Stuart D. Lee. In this article - which also inspired this dissertation - Campbell (2014) discusses in detail the nature concept in Tolkien's works and draws attention to the following point:

¹ In 1978, American director Ralph Bakshi produced the animated movie for *The Lord of the Rings*. In 1980, an animation called *The Return of the King* was produced by animation studio companies Rankin/Bass and Topcraft. The trilogy produced by New Zealand director Peter Jackson between 2001-2003 is the most prominent. The final film of the trilogy, *The Return of the King*, won 17 out of 30 categories at the Academy Award for which it was nominated. After this success, Jackson made *The Hobbit* trilogy between 2012-2014. Currently, the Amazon Prime is shooting a series featuring Second Age from the Middle-earth corpus, with the biggest budget ever spent in the TV industry. Please visit for the last news: <https://www.theonering.net/torwp/category/amazon-tv-series/>

² Many computer games have been produced dealing with the subjects in *The Lord of the Rings*.

³ Scenes of *The Lord of the Rings* films shot by Jackson in New Zealand were opened to tourists and the tourism industry has benefited greatly from this. Likewise, there are wooden-houses inspired by the Hobbit-holes in Ormanya Wildlife Park, in Kocaeli, Turkey. Please visit the website: <https://www.ormanya.com/ormankoy>

⁴ Many musicals and songs with the theme of *The Lord of the Rings* have been produced.

⁵ It refers to all of Tolkien's notes, drafts and published writings on Middle-earth and Arda universe. After that, this term will be used frequently.

“Nature in Tolkien’s legendarium [...] is connected to the divine and is the province of angels” (435).

The religious discourse that emerged here is a very studied concept in Tolkien’s universe, just like the concept of nature. Religious discourses or descriptions, which have been discussed in many ways, continue to bring different approaches to Tolkien studies. In many studies on this subject, Tolkien’s dark Catholic belief, known primarily through his letters, has often been tried to be identified with his works or, on the contrary, the effects of polytheistic religions on Tolkien’s cosmogony were mentioned. Whatever is said, the standard view is that Tolkien’s cosmogony is accepted as mythology. It is even said that Tolkien’s real intention when he began to compose this corpus was to create a “Mythology for England.”⁶ Nevertheless, here, sometimes overlooked and sometimes eagerly ignored, is this cosmogony has its own religion.

Here again, it is helpful to say that religion is also an umbrella term, as in the term nature. In addition, what is referred to with this umbrella term is a religious formation similar to beliefs and rituals in archaic periods. These two umbrella terms are inseparable. No religious belief can be formed independently from any structure of nature. This two progress together and feed each other along the way. Sometimes they intertwine; sometimes, they stand side by side but cannot be separated. It is precisely the purpose of this doctoral thesis. In order to express how nature and religion progress as an inseparable whole in Tolkien’s universe and how they intertwine when appropriate, firstly, ecological and religious theories will be examined, and then the equivalents of both umbrella terms in this corpus will be analysed.

Although it is known that there are other works in which these two umbrella terms work together, it is evident that especially Tolkien’s Middle-earth corpus is very suitable for this fellowship. This corpus, on which Tolkien worked for many years, fed both his literary side and his academic works. Considering that many examples of world mythologies, which are now read as fiction, have reached the present day with a collective transfer, the fact that a single person has signed such an extensive work reminds both the respect to the author and the magnitude of his contribution to literature. The fellowship of these two concepts, which will be discussed with the unique ecology and mythology of this alternative world formed by the depictions of nature, geographical structures, and divine order, devised to the finest detail, can be

⁶ For detail information, look at Tolkien’s letter to Milton Waldman: Carpenter, Humphrey (ed.), (2006). *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 2nd ed., London, Harper Collins Publishers.

better grasped. While following a holistic approach with its unique history, races, gods, biodiversity, evil, divine justice, fate, and eschatology, the connotations of this approach will also be revealed.

In order to do this, in the First Chapter, ecological approaches will be used, and an interdisciplinary way will be followed. In other words, the disciplines that feed the studies of environment and ecology in literature will be included in the theoretical cover of the dissertation, and their approach to religion will be detailed when necessary in the subheading “Environmental Awareness.” The various terms, such as “ecology,” “environment,” and “nature,” used primarily in ecocriticism will be clarified and separated according to the diverse fields or disciplines to be mentioned. Since another focus of this dissertation is to reveal the excessive domination of nature, the traces of when it began will be broadly discussed in human history. Some significant changes and transitions in human history will be revealed due to the extent of the domination. Transition to settled life or the evolution of the human mind will be emphasized as the significant issues for the devastation of nature. For the domination of nature is induced further by the idea of “possessiveness,” the problems concerning human beings’ attitudes towards other beings will be discussed.

After the Age of Enlightenment, man posed himself as the sole owner of the universe by putting himself at the centre and distancing the other beings from himself. Humanism, the idea behind this attitude, will be examined as a contrast to biodiversity, which means “the existence of a larger number of different kinds of animals and plants,” making “a balanced environment.”⁷ While biodiversity is “the richness of Nature” (Ehrenfeld, 1981: 196), humanism suggested controlling this “richness” as far as it was helpful in the perfection of the human species. As a reaction to humanism’s cruel treatment of nature, the Romantics grounded “romantic ecology,” another inspiration for the dissertation. With moderation, Romantics’ exciting ideas will be studied to enhance the ecological approach.

In addition to humanism, Romantics opposed Industrialism, believing that it prevented man’s contact with nature. For this reason, being close to or escaping to nature are two crucial themes the Romantics used in literature. Likewise, Tolkien’s escapism, which he mentioned in his essay “On Fairy-Stories,” propounds escaping “*into* reality” (Wood, 2003: 1; emphasis in original). From this perspective, Romantics

⁷ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/biodiversity?q=biodiversity>

and Tolkien's escapism idealize a pre-industrial environment rather than a mechanized one. In a mechanized world, where modern science and technology break the grounds, holism is believed to be lost. In holism, there is an active interaction of structures. However, the mechanistic perspective tries to break this integrity.

Tolkien's understanding of "magic" will be enhanced compared with modern science, which can explode in the wrong hands. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Tolkien's ideas were anti-science. On the other hand, he was wary of "power," which is also a critical theme in his corpus. Accordingly, Tom Shippey (2010) points out how dangerous power could be by recalling what Lord Acton states: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (n.p.). Power's tendency to corrupt is evident in Tolkien's corpus in many ways. Such corruption results especially in ecocide⁸ (destruction of the natural environment, especially when willfully done) in his legendarium.

Lastly, the diversity of all living/non-living beings and interaction between the species will be studied in terms of posthumanism, a recent critical approach to many disciplines from biology to literature. Additionally, "agency" and "intra-activity of materials" will be discussed briefly, and they will be exemplified from the corpus. As a contrast to posthumanism, transhumanism will be mentioned, as well.

Secondly, an interdisciplinary approach will be provided in the part related to religion. In the subheading "Nature with/out Religion," a history of religious beliefs will be outlined with Mircea Eliade's works from anthropology to archaeology, from mythology to paganism. As a historian of religions, Eliade created multiple works concerning various religious beliefs and rituals from different parts of the world. Based on these studies, in the subheading "Religion based on Nature," many archaic and ancient beliefs will be given to pave the way for the religious analyses of Tolkien's mythology.

Human beings have always asked questions concerning the cosmos. As answers, they have looked at nature. From animal spirits to burial ceremonies, Eliade explains significant relations between man and nature. In addition to this, crucial areas where the religious rituals varied will be emphasized. The most critical of these areas is the underground that mostly has a negative connotation. Mining, metallurgy, and blacksmithing are associated with evil in religious approach because miners,

⁸ "The Greek *oikos*, which gives us 'eco,' means home or abode; the Latin *caedere*, to kill; hence, ecocide" (Curry, 2004: 119; emphasis in original).

metallurgists, and blacksmiths are widely known as “masters of fires” in comparative religions (Eliade, 1978: 54). The belief that man could transmute every material into a precious thing paved the way for alchemy. In Tolkien’s legendarium, this kind of transmutation will be exemplified in terms of the greediness of human beings.

Apart from this, the underground is associated with the land of the dead. As a result, Eliade points out the significance of underground initiation ceremonies. Accordingly, the burial places and the materials used for these places’ buildings, namely stones, granites, or rock, come into prominence. Due to this fact, these materials provide a bond between the dead and alive. Likewise, the same bond will be traced in Tolkien’s corpus. Lastly, Eliade gives many examples from the natural formations, such as caves, mountains or peaks, and forests, to comprehend their religious attributes. Forests, specifically, are inhabited by spirits, which will be studied in the subheading “Types of Spirit.”

Even though today, the word “spirit” is used widely, the name of this mythology’s essential phenomenon was diverse in history. The words spiritus, pneuma, and ruach will be clarified by their various meanings. Pneuma, specifically, is exemplified through its relation to the human seed. Additionally, the perception of the spirit in Christianity and paganism will be compared to enhance the issue.

Finally, “Theory of Spirit: Bio-religious Nature,” the last subheading of the First Chapter, will be grounded in a holistic perspective to complete the theoretical part of the dissertation and compose all the discussions uttered. This subheading will also contribute to the analyses parts of the dissertation because it will enhance animism, vitalism, ecological science, arcadian outlook, and biocentrism. All these terms will be helpful to analyse Tolkien’s Middle-earth. In addition to this, Derek Wall and Donald Worster’s ideas will guide this subheading. Observing nature both scientifically and religiously is a method embodied by natural history essayists. Likewise, how Tolkien devised nature descriptions and the totality of the cosmology in Middle-earth resemble what these essayists aimed in their works. Vitalism, suggested by Henri Bergson, will be mentioned broadly because these essayists based it on ecological science. Apart from this, they proposed that there is vital energy (force) in nature, paving the way for biocentrism. The contrast between biocentrism and anthropocentrism will be emphasized by suggesting that each unit in the universe is entangled rather than hierarchically ordered. As a result, human beings are not in control but nature in control.

In the Second Chapter of the dissertation, Tolkien's Middle-earth will be analysed from an ecological perspective. Due to the ideas discussed in the First Chapter, the terms mentioned above will be broadly applied to the races, places, events, characters, plants, and animals in Tolkien's legendarium. It is important to note that the Third Age of Middle-earth will be the main focus of this analysis.

The first subheading of the Second Chapter will be "Hobbits/the Shire" because Tolkien's narration in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (both narrate the events of the Third Age) begins with this race. The country the Hobbits⁹ live in is as important as the race because the Shire is suitable to exhibit an Arcadian way of life. Since they mainly deal with the land, their closeness to nature will be emphasized. In addition to this, their practice of agriculture is open to debate. Even though it seems sustainable, the ideas about agriculture discussed in the First Chapter reveal that even "wise-use" of the land may create devastation in nature (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 124). Nevertheless, this lovely country of the Hobbits is open to being destroyed by the mechanized outlook of nature. Saruman is the main actor of this destruction in the Shire. On the one side, he commits ecocide in the Shire by cutting the trees and building mills. On the other side, he uses the Hobbits as slaves. In this context, how this lovely country turns into a capital one will be examined, and restoration of the country, in the end, will be emphasized.

In the second subheading, "The Elves/Their Eco-friendly Dwellings in the Third Age," the most famous race in Tolkien's legendarium, will be discussed in terms of their mission in Middle-earth. From the time when they awoke, the Elves have been the "stewardship" of nature in Middle-earth (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 42). It means that they guard the realm they inhabit and struggle to beautify it as best as they can. In the Third Age of Middle-earth, the dwelling places of the Elves become the resting destinations for travellers and adventurers. As narrated in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, both Bilbo and the dwarves, and Frodo and the hobbits rest in Elrond's Rivendell and Galadriel's Lothlórien. In these places, the companies heal their wounds and feed their spirits. Thus, the Elves' mission to heal the wounds of Middle-earth is realized in the characters, as well. While the Hobbits are agriculturalists, the Elves are the horticulturalists of Middle-earth, which is suggested by Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans (2006) as such: "Even when it is undertaken rightly and lovingly,

⁹ The capital will be used if the whole race is mentioned. Otherwise, lower case letter will be used.

horticulture implies some rule over the land and its products—some aspect of a ruler choosing what the land will produce and how it will be arranged” (42). According to this, the Elves both glorify the lands they inhabit and try to improve them by the magic they use. However, this magic is not a dangerous action mentioned above. This Elven magic takes its power from nature itself. The more nature presents, the better the Elves repay it. As an example, Galadriel’s Mallorn trees can be given. Since she lived once in Aman, she wanted to glorify the beauty of Valinor in Middle-earth. As a result, she devised these trees as a reflection of beautiful trees in Valinor.

The following subheading, “Man is Man Everywhere,” serves to identify with the anthropocentric view in human history. As the heading suggests, the Men in Middle-earth are more inclined to have a desire for power. This desire even causes the Fall of Men in religious terms, which will be discussed in the Third Chapter of the dissertation. The most prominent reason behind Men’s tendency for power is that their religious mission in Middle-earth is not as straightforward as that of the Elves. Nevertheless, there are exceptions in this matter. The case of Aragorn and Faramir will be mentioned through their contribution to the totality of cosmology. Additionally, they are ecocentric characters by caring flora and fauna of the lands in Middle-earth. In contrast to Aragorn and Faramir’s ecocentric perspective, there are many characters who represent the anthropocentric perspective. By the power they attain, they are corrupted so much that they are punished in the end.

The fourth subheading, “The Lands Outside the Hobbiton/Ecological Adventures of Bilbo and Frodo Outside the Shire,” deals with Bilbo and Frodo’s quests in the light of ecology and religion. Arnold van Gennep’s descriptions of the rites will be the primary guidance in this analysis. Both Bilbo and Frodo experience many transitional stages in their quests. Even though these stages seem to be religious, the changes in the environment, weather, and geography are evident to be parallel to them. Thus, these changes, namely ecotones, will be clarified in each stage they take in their religious rites. Secondly, the second phase of the quest¹⁰ narrated in *The Lord of the Rings* will be discussed regarding the characters’ experience with nature. Throughout the second half of the quest, the characters witness the extent of the devastation of nature. Except for the members of the fellowship, other characters, such as Théoden, the

¹⁰ After Frodo and Sam leave for Mordor.

King of Rohan, present some crucial environmental awareness. Lastly, the Huorns'¹¹ involvement in the war of Helm's Deep contributes to the discussions of holism and vitalism in the First Chapter. Since they are organic beings, resembling trees, their fight against Saruman's Orcs symbolizes nature's voice or action. From the trees to the winds, each unit in this universe stands together against the ill-deeds.

The following subheading, "Tom Bombadil as a Nature Spirit," will mention that Bombadil is a unique character in Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus and worthy of being analysed separately. As a general view, Bombadil is accepted as a nature spirit in Tolkien studies because it seems that he "*stands for*" Middle-earth (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 19; emphasis in original). Thus, Bombadil's existence in Middle-earth contributes to the core of the dissertation. The sixth subheading, "Trees and Plants in Middle-earth: Cosmo-Ecological Entities," will reveal that cosmic trees in mythology are significant both ecologically and religiously. The cosmic tree of Middle-earth's mythology is the Two Trees of Valinor. From how these Two Trees are devised to other trees that descended from them and planted in different parts of Arda will be broadly discussed according to Eliade's categories of tree symbolism. Furthermore, Treebeard and the Ents will be mentioned because Arda's goddess of vegetation devised these creatures. Accordingly, their mission in this universe is crucial in ecological terms. As the shepherds of the forests, they take a side in the war against Saruman in Isengard, and they have the responsibility to restore the mechanized land into a fertile green country.

Lastly, "Desolation of Smaug, the Wasteland of Isengard and the Ashes of Mordor" will complete this chapter by emphasizing the extent of the ecocide in the Third Age of Middle-earth. Narrated in *The Hobbit*, the Lonely Mountain and the surrounding lands are turned into desolate places under Smaug's hoarding tendency. Bilbo and the dwarves succeed in getting into the mountain; however, the dragon senses that danger is coming. Thus, he attacks the nearest town of people of Men and destroys the lake city. Likewise, both in Isengard and Mordor, the members of the fellowship witness the devastation. Saruman and Sauron turn their lands into dark and full of ash places. Moreover, the air in these places is so poisonous that the characters feel sick in

¹¹ "Sentient trees (or possibly regressed Ents) of Fangorn Forest, who dwelt only in the deepest dales of that land. Like the Great Willow of the Old Forest in Eriador, they were 'limb-lithe' and could move very swiftly from place to place, wrapped in tree-shadow. They were extremely dangerous – most of all to Orcs, whom they hated with an unbridled passion. Huorns were, however, under the control of true Ents" (Tyler, 2014: n.p.).

these lands. Nevertheless, there is still hope even in these lands, which will be clarified in a detailed way.

The Third Chapter of the dissertation will examine the religious terms and rituals discussed in the First Chapter and be applied to Tolkien's legendarium. Admitting Tolkien's legendarium as mythology and its uniqueness, the approach will be shaped accordingly. As in every mythology, it has a creation myth, which will be chiefly discussed in the subheading "Creation Myth." As stated above, Middle-earth's mythology is unique and has characteristic divine order. In the subheading mentioned above, all these characteristics will be examined and mentioned. This mythology is based on a polytheistic religious system, in which there are various gods and goddesses known for their areas of influence. Thus, in the second subheading, "The Valar as Natural Elements," Arda's gods and goddesses will be categorized under five elements (four of them are Air, Water, Fire, and Earth and the fifth one is Spirit) according to their areas of power. It is noteworthy to state that these divinities' powers are related to natural formations and the vital energy mentioned above.

Mythology cannot be considered without evil. Likewise, in Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus, evil has many shapes. The following subheading, "Evil," will reveal that both bodily and spiritually, it exists from the very beginning of the creation and is said to exist to its end. The duality between good and evil will be enhanced in the light of embodiments the good and evil have. Furthermore, Melkor/Morgoth and Sauron will be discussed in a detailed way because they are the primary source of evil and as archaic as the Valar. Apart from them, the other embodiments of evil, such as the One Ring, the Ringwraiths, and Ungoliant and Shelob, will be examined.

In the fourth subheading, "Fall of Men," the cosmological meaning of Men's punishment by the gods will be mentioned. This issue is also critical in ecological terms because the geographical changes occur when the Men are punished in the mythologies. If the reason for the punishment is the Men's corruption, it means that desire for power and possessiveness create natural disasters in the ecological approach. The following subheading, "The Divine Rights of the Kings/Aragorn," will enhance the idea that the kingdoms of the Men are grounded on the divine rights the gods grant to the kings. Thus, as the true heir of Númenóreans, Aragorn becomes king at the end of the Third Age of Middle-earth. In the ring quest, Aragorn does his best to help the other members of the fellowship, which proves him to be a true heir. In addition, his healing power will

be exemplified because it is believed that true kings should have the healing power in Middle-earth.

The sixth subheading, “(In)visible Religious Practices,” will enhance the idea that even though there are divinities in this universe, there are no specific religious practices witnessed in Tolkien’s legendarium. There are some exceptions, and they will be clarified. Lastly, the subheading, “Questions of (Im)mortality,” will expand on the immortality of the Elves and the mortality of the Men in Middle-earth’s mythology. The spirits of the Elves do not leave Arda but retire in the Halls of Mandos. Thus, the Elves’ existence is bounded to the universe. This issue will be examined in both ecological and religious terms. On the contrary, the spirits of the Men leave Arda because Men are mortal creatures. Accordingly, their approach to nature and religion differs from that of the Elves in this matter. Thus, it affects the most events in Middle-earth for ages.

In conclusion, all discussions of Tolkien’s Middle-earth and nature-religion fellowship in the previous chapters will be gathered. The findings related to these will be presented in the Conclusion part of this dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE

ECO AND RELIGION: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND RELIGION STUDIES

This chapter provides a broad theoretical background for the ecological and religious analyses of Tolkien's Middle-earth. For this, interdisciplinary approaches to environmental and religion studies will be discussed, and these studies will be related to Tolkien's legendarium.

1.1. Environmental Awareness

First of all, the fundamental differences between the terms ecology, environment, and nature should be clarified to comprehend the usages of these terms in this dissertation. According to OLD, ecology is "the relation of plants and living creatures to each other and to their environment; the study of this."¹² If ecology is the study of the relations of the beings to their environment, then environment means "the natural world in which people, animals and plants live."¹³ For "natural world" stems from the word nature, then it means "all the plants, animals and things that exist in the universe that are not made by people."¹⁴ Among these three terms, "people" is excluded only in the definition of nature since human beings are a part of ecology and environment but not the owner of nature. However, in human history, nature is always attributed to any position in which it is regarded to have a mission. The scriptures say that nature – the plants, animals, and things according to the definition - is at the service of human beings, and these books give humanity the power to rule over it.¹⁵ However, the recent ecological devastation is the most evident proof of how far this superiority has gone and will continue to advance. The beginning of this destruction did not begin with the command of the scriptures to dominate nature. Exactly 2.5 million years before the emergence of the sacred texts, Hominins in Africa were able to cut the meat of the

¹² <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/ecology?q=ecology>

¹³ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/environment?q=environment>

¹⁴ https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/nature_1?q=nature

¹⁵ "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28, *Holy Bible: Old Testament*, AGES Digital Library, 1996, 6).

"He it is Who created for you *all that is on earth*" (Al-Baqarah, 29, *The Noble Qur'an*, Madinah, King Fahd Complex, 7).

"God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and *master it*; and *rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth*'" (Genesis, 1:28, *The Torah: The Five Books of Moses*, Illinois, Varda Books, 2001, 3).

animals with the stones that they had carved and sharpened. During excavations at a site in the Lokalalei region of East Africa, fragmented bones of 12 mammal species and crocodiles and tortoise shells were found (Coolidge and Wynn, 2009: 99). However, this does not show that they were hunters because the stone tools they used were not sharp killer weapons. Instead, they took the remnants of the animals killed by carnivores to a safe place and stripped the remaining meat from the bones. This attitude shows that Hominins could not exert any physical and behavioural superiority in their environment and instead fed on the leftovers of the strong animals of the regions where they lived. Likewise, it was observed that wood could be cut with these stone tools, and thus they used wood to make a fire to protect themselves from predators (Coolidge and Wynn, 2009: 115).

Fire was also a tool for Hominins to socialize. Possibly, they sat in groups by the fire that was lit at night.¹⁶ This situation is also a sign of a transition from living on trees to living on the ground. Spreading from Africa to Europe and Asia about 2 million years ago, *Homo* evolved cognitively and behaviourally with the spread of various human species in those regions and lived in hunter-gatherer groups. Due to the climatic conditions of those regions, the carnivorous diet rather than the herbivorous diet developed the hunting skills of the Neanderthals (Coolidge and Wynn, 2009: 184-5). Until about 18,000 years ago, it was discovered that hunter-gatherers committed mass slaughter of animals and stockpiled their meat for the winter season waiting for them. 12,000 years ago, with the agricultural revolution, there was the domestication of plants and animals and the transition to settled life. Although the practices differed and the tools used changed, the interaction of the human species with nature continued exponentially. As a result of the evolution of the human mind, its rule on nature has progressed at full speed. The deterioration and destruction of the existing ecological equilibrium are influential on every living and non-living being.

The next point reached with the evolution of the human mind is the placement of the human species in a central position in the world. Especially after the Middle Ages, discoveries and scientific developments showed how men could better understand the planet they were living on and how to use this planet for the sake of themselves. As discoveries and scientific developments increased, the norms and rules of the human

¹⁶ Fire is the symbol of civilization. In religious terms, Prometheus' myth reveals the fact that human beings lived underground before fire was given to them. With the fire, they learned how to cook, to protect themselves from predators and to keep warm. Thus, Prometheus "is the greatest civilizing hero" (Eliade, 1978: 257).

species became more valid. As Jonathan Bate (1998) states in “Poetry and biodiversity,” “the human claim to understand nature has led to Western humankind’s understanding of itself as apart from nature and therefore able to use and reshape nature at will” (53). Constantine Francis Chassebeuf De Volney, a traveller, noted his travels to Egypt, Asia, and America between 1783 and 1803. In his book *The Ruins, or Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires*, he mentions the point of view of humanity when empires were first established. He (2006) suggests that each individual lived independently from the other at the beginning of human communities. There was no situation in which one individual tried to gain superiority over the other. Even in sustainable common living spaces, everyone knew how to be content with what they had, and they did not covet too much and did not produce more than they needed, which created harmony (57). Furthermore, transitions from small communities such as hunter-gatherers to large nations did not require immediate abandonment of old traditions of humanity and changes in the conditions of life within the empire. Even as they went through a phase from small communities to large nations, people were still far from exploitation and over-consumption, consistent with nature as always and equal among themselves.

What happened to that harmony and equality within time? From the order where everyone worked for themselves in egalitarian circumstances, they turned into larger human communities that used, produced, and consumed nature’s resources unlimitedly, resulting in which the population increased, divided into different empires (Volney, 2006: 57). In the continuation of this, “[t]he relations of man becoming complicated, the internal order of societies became more difficult to maintain. Time and industry having generated riches, [...] and because equality, practicable among individuals, could not subsist among families, the natural equilibrium was broken (Volney, 2006: 58). After a while, the abundance of production developed the feeling of possession in men. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau says in his book *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, “[t]he first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying This is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society” (40; capital in original).

Nevertheless, this sense of possession was not according to the laws of nature for the reason that “[t]here is no such thing as property in nature. A species inhabits its ecosystem, it does not possess it” (Bate, 1998: 62). One of the biggest reasons for the ownership of the land was the transition to agriculture. Human communities, who also settled down with agriculture, managed to improve themselves in animal husbandry.

Tillage, animal feeding, and using animals to plow the soil caused them to use many mechanical tools related to agriculture.¹⁷ Through the processes of cultivation, ploughing, harvesting, fruit and vegetable growing, stockpiling food, and making the land suitable for agriculture, human communities managed to adapt to the existing rhythm of nature by using it for their purposes.

Lynn White (1996), who states that each family had enough land at first, says that the farmers united these lands later and brought their oxen together because they did not have enough. “Thus, distribution of land was based no longer on the needs of a family but, rather, on the capacity of a power machine to till the earth” (8), continues White (1996), and states that this situation changed men’s relationship with the land. Thus, man, who used to be a companion of nature, then became the exploiter of it (8).¹⁸ White (1996) mentions that humanity reflects this exploitative attitude even on calendars: “[T]hey show men coercing the world around them - plowing, harvesting, chopping trees, butchering pigs. Man and nature are two things, and man is master” (8). These calendars show that exploitation of nature is not possible only through agriculture. Except for agriculture, there is exploitation wherever human hands touch nature. The diversity of exploitation is also demonstrated by the fact that people cut down trees for fuel, fish for food, and mine for ores or coals. It is argued that these processes are accepted as an indicator of the survival instincts of human communities and that they build their civilizations on them and form their cultures through these processes. The critical issue here is not the view that man should not benefit from nature in any way but should be in a relationship with it as observed in other living beings. A monkey, for example, feeds on fruit from a tree. As the winter season approaches, it is a fact that some animals stock up on food to spend the winter. This way of life already exists in nature (this was also the way of life of the first human species). However, the point here begins exactly after that because no animal has ever been seen to cut a tree, fish arbitrarily, or exploit natural resources. Since human beings, who like to escape to the extremes of everything, do not know where to stop, forget that other living beings also feed on these resources, burn forests, pollute the seas, dry up lakes and rivers, and end

¹⁷ The Hobbits exhibit the best example of this transition in Tolkien’s legendarium. The area that is the Shire now used to be the fields of the kingdom of Arnor. Sawn fields from the old kingdom make the transition to farming easy for the Hobbits: “The land was rich and kindly, and though it had long been deserted when they entered it, it had before been well tilled, and there the king had once had many farms, cornlands, vineyards, and woods” (Tolkien, 2004: 5).

¹⁸ Daniel Defoe’s most well-known novel *Robinson Crusoe* reflects the exploitative feature of human beings very well.

underground resources. Not to mention, they pollute the air that every living being breathes, pierce the ozone layer, and cover everywhere with concrete.

Christopher Dawson (2001), in *Progress and Religion: An Historical Inquiry*, cites a book written by a French sociologist named F. J. Le Play. In this book, named *Les Ouvriers Européens*, Le Play has observed especially European families and divided the “primary nature occupations” in which these families work actively into six groups: “[F]irst the hunters and food gatherers, secondly the pastoral peoples, thirdly the fishermen of the sea coasts, fourthly the agriculturalists, fifthly the foresters, and sixthly the miners” (52). To Dawson, these six groups constitute the infrastructure of cultures that enable civilizations to be divided into different groups. These primary nature occupations, also seen in Tolkien’s legendarium, form the social structure in Tolkien’s universe, as Dawson mentions. Although the extent of the damage these groups inflict on the environment is less than in our natural world, Tolkien also clearly shows what extreme exploitation will cost, like dwarves mining.

For this reason, Dickerson and Evans (2006) express how these groups can damage the environment, both in the real world and Tolkien’s universe: “[U]se of the natural landscape for destructive, selfish reasons, even when the perpetrators claim some practical justification for their purposes. For the Ents, even justifiable usage—in modern environmental politics, ‘wise use’—has to be situated on an ethical continuum whose furthest extreme is simple environmental waste and destruction” (124). These practices, including agriculture, can lead to simple environmental pollution even if resources are used wisely. One of the most distinctive features of these groups is that they passively nature by affecting the human communities living in the cultures they founded. Therefore, nature is silent in these cultures “in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative” (Manes, 1996: 15). However, this situation is a little different in Tolkien’s legendarium. Nature is not silent as it is said, but a supreme being with a spirit.

As in Tolkien’s legendarium, people in animistic cultures thought that living and non-living beings have spirits, and each object is in interaction due to this vitality. “In addition to human language, there is also the language of birds, the wind, earthworms, wolves, and waterfalls - a world of autonomous speakers whose intents (especially for hunter-gatherer peoples) one ignores at one’s peril” (15) states Manes (1996). These languages other than the human language are common in Tolkien’s universe.

The last point today is that now both governments and non-governmental organizations are discussing ecological crisis and looking for solutions every day for it. While scientists and politicians cannot find a solution to this crime yet, what kind of solution can literature, an art branch, find? Even if it occurs as a personal activity, literature cannot remain indifferent to a crisis concerning all living and non-living beings in the world. As Richard Kerridge (1998) says, “[l]iterature is not leisure, not separate from science or politics, any more than ‘nature’ can be separate from human life, or someone’s backyard be immune from pollution” (7). However, many politicians or organizations transform the ecological crisis into an ideology and politicize it. In this chapter, you will not be able to see any of them - that is to say, “ecology” turned into a political ideology. This chapter is concerned with the ongoing relationship between the human species and nature and how human beings develop their perception of environmentalism.

Throughout history, great empires and religions have combined people living in small communities within civilizations and created great nations. However, the destruction of these nations was greater than the hunter-gatherer people who had lived in small communities or the first people who had dealt with agriculture. The ecological system is crushed under the great nations and is faced with losing its dynamics. E. F. Schumacher (1989), in his book *Small is Beautiful*, states that small communities or small-scale institutions are less harmful than large communities or large-scale institutions because “their individual force is small in relation to the recuperative forces of nature” (19; pagination is mine). Arguing that smallness is wisdom, Schumacher explains that the reason for this is the smallness and disorder in obtaining knowledge based on experimentation. However, the “greatest danger invariably arises from the ruthless application, on a vast scale, of partial knowledge such as we are currently witnessing in the application of nuclear energy, of the new chemistry in agriculture, of transportation technology, and countless other things” (Schumacher, 1989: 20). In addition, the damage done to nature by the ignorance of small communities versus the destruction by huge human communities through greed, jealousy, or hunger for power is immeasurably different. At the same time, small communities take better care of their lands than large companies or governments (Schumacher, 1989: 20). When the small communities mentioned here are considered hunter-gatherers of prehistoric times or the first people to deal with agriculture, it might be assumed that the footprint of the

damage to nature was small. Today's "megalomaniac governments" (20), as expressed by Schumacher (1989), degrade the ecosystem and exploit natural resources.

As the biologist Edward O. Wilson (2001) mentions in his book *The Diversity of Life*, nature has its map, which is bioregion – "[a] continuous natural area, such as river system or mountain range, large enough to extend beyond political boundaries" (452). Humanism emerged mainly after the French Revolution and became popular during the Industrial Revolution, and could be the biggest enemy of biodiversity. David W. Ehrenfeld (1981), in his book *The Arrogance of Humanism*, argues that humanism is a religion. It is "a supreme faith in human reason-its ability to confront and solve the many problems that humans face, its ability to rearrange both the world of Nature and the affairs of men and women so that human life will prosper" (5). But this religion has neither a god nor a holy scripture. Humanism glorifies the human mind, "so it rejects other assertions of power, including the power of God, the power of supernatural forces, and even the undirected power of Nature in league with blind chance. The first two don't exist, according to humanism; the last can, with effort, be mastered" (Ehrenfeld, 1981: 5). According to Ehrenfeld (1981), humanism is a strict anti-nature (6) and has the same characteristics as monotheistic religions with the idea of presenting nature to human dominance. Ehrenfeld (1981) argues that the idea of creating everything for the benefit of human being goes as far as ancient Greece, saying that it is a straightforward process for humans to leave one religion and choose humanism as such:

One only had to start with the belief that humans were created in God's image. God could then be retired on half-pension, still trotted out at the appropriate ceremonies wearing the old medals, until bit by bit. He was demystified, emasculated, and abandoned. The music that accompanied this process, in its later years, was the throbbing of Watt's steam engine. "Here," it pulsed, "is the real power, power, power." To this, the advocates of traditional religion found no satisfactory answer (although one was available, had they had the ability to understand the environmental and societal degradation that had already begun). Had they not, after all, created this godless monster, humanism, with their endless chatter about our inheritance and dominion over the earth? What did they expect? (8).

Especially in the Age of Enlightenment, this "monster" created by human beings changed man's perspective towards other beings with an understanding that put human beings in the centre and turned those beings into a platform of exploitation. This point

of view maintained its validity in the science, ecology, art, and literature of the time and tried to spread the superiority of the human mind to every field in a noticeable dimension.

Humanism, which was adorned with intellectual infrastructure, knitted with classical philosophy's ethical and aesthetic rules, prompting analytical thinking, shook literature like other fields. The first literary ones who opposed humanism are Romantics. The Romantic Movement that started with the "Preface" by William Wordsworth to his *Lyrical Ballads* laid the foundations for romantic ecology before criticism based upon ecology in the 1970s. John Ruskin, William Morris, and Edward Thomas are also among those who pursued the tradition of romantic ecology (Coupe, 2000: 13). The sense of nature of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, on the other hand, paved the way for the Transcendentalism movement of North America, rather than the religious approach of Wordsworth's understanding of nature. Although the names mentioned above form a branch of the romantic ecology, Jonathan Bate is the person who gave this name. In the Introduction part of his book *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, Bate (1991) says: "But it still seems to me valuable and important to make claims for the historical continuity of a tradition of environmental consciousness; Wordsworth by no means initiated that tradition, but he has been a vital influence upon it" (9).¹⁹ The first chapter of Bate's book (1991), "A Language That is Ever Green," mentions the contrasting criticisms of Wordsworth's poetry, as well as the definition of poetry in the romantic poetics as not only a form of verbal expression but also an expression of emotional communication between people and nature (17). Besides, Bate includes that pastoral poetry is not as innocent as it appears. However, it was used to cover up the economic and ecological troubles created by the feudal system that continued. Although landowners' sympathy for such poems or the joy of the least respected shepherd in the feudal system is noteworthy, as Bate states (1991), "[a]lmost everywhere on this earth, the land is owned – or claimed – by someone. In a small country like Britain the pressure of landownership has always been exceptionally acute. In international law, even much of the sea is owned" (18-19). However, Bate (1991) mentions that in Wordsworth's poem *The Prelude*, there are

¹⁹ Although the analyses of Tolkien's Middle-earth will not be studied specifically in the light of romantic ecology, it should be emphasized that these names who initiated this tradition pursued religion in nature. Even, they re-placed the religion with nature and asked whether nature was the new religion. This idea became the inspiration for the thesis of the dissertation. For a better understanding of Tolkien's eco-mythology, what these names uttered is crucial.

some places where even the landlords cannot reach their hands and that there are free shepherds who live without serving to this landowners: “[T]he only master whom the shepherd serves is nature; there is no feudal landlord. Furthermore, the image of the working paradise evokes a tradition of anti-feudal protest that goes back to Wat Tyler and the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 in which John Ball produced the slogan ‘When Adam delved and Eve span / Who was then a gentleman?’” (24). According to what Bate states, this freely wandering shepherd mentioned by Wordsworth in his poem is not, in fact, a dream, but the real-life of a shepherd that Wordsworth saw in Switzerland. In contrast to the fact that humanitarian people were entitled to dominate nature, Wordsworth’s other poem, *The Ruined Cottage*, “proposes that the survival of humanity comes with nature’s mastery over the edifices of civilization” (Bate, 1991: 34). In addition, Romantics believed that green is a source of life and a source of spirit. For this reason, “the Romantic ecology has nothing to do with flight from the material world, from history and society – it is in fact an attempt to enable mankind the better to live in the material world by entering into harmony with the environment” (Bate, 1991: 40). Bate mentions (1991) that under the idea of escapism to nature, known as the romantic ideology, not only the Industrial Revolution or urbanism subsided, but that William Hazlitt’s idea of “nature is a kind of universal home”²⁰ (53) led to this. This phenomenon, which forms the basis of the romantic ecology, emphasizes that poets wrote poetry based on back to nature even before the Industrial Revolution began. Nevertheless, the most significant criticism of this pastoral/urban/agrarian romanticism comes from Norman Wirzba, as Dickerson and Evans also refer in their book. Wirzba says that romanticizing local community life is dangerous at some point because these communities are sensitive provincial communities. For example, Wirzba mentions that in farming communities, the contribution of women to society is not welcomed and that these communities are not very keen on foreigners and their new ideas. As a result, “a form of communal claustrophobia” occurs (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 73). The danger of exaggerated romanticism of pastoral life is particularly noticeable in Tolkien’s legendarium, especially in the Shire part. Hobbits are not very fond of foreigners and their new ideas, just as Wirzba mentions. Gandalf’s presence, for example, always

²⁰ Patrick Curry (2004) describes what he feels while reading Tolkien’s books as follows: “like a lost home” (252).

creates uneasiness in the Shire because every time Gandalf, “wandering wizard,” comes, something mysterious happens to a hobbit.²¹

Even Karl Marx, the founder of Marxism, treats nature from a materialist point of view and thinks it should benefit humanity (McLellan, 2000: 90). This idea can lead to the exploitation of nature, and eventually, it did. To Bate (1991), “[u]ntil quite recently the Romantics were valued precisely because they set themselves against the ideology of capital and offered an alternative, holistic vision – because, we may say, they were the first ecologists” (57). The influence of Romantics can also be mentioned as a point of feeding English socialism. As a Romantic, John Ruskin emphasizes that pleasure, happiness, and joy are more important than the labor produced.²² As a social activist, William Morris was influenced by the writings of Ruskin rather than Marx’s *Das Kapital*, as he created the socialism base in England. In the nineteenth century, industrialization was at the top level, an empty effort for Ruskin. Rather than having more forests, industrialization was not something that would save the world, according to Ruskin’s point of view. Air pollution could only be prevented by planting more trees.

The dilemma of industrialization vs. being close to nature is very obvious in Tolkien’s universe, and it is a significant phenomenon in the works of Tolkien, which constantly manifests itself in the background and sometimes changes the course of the events. On the one hand, there is the industrial fire burned by Saruman in the Third Age of Middle-earth; on the other hand, there are races that are still able to remain faithful to nature. Two contradictory ideas either face one another or fight in big battles. The reader witnesses this war at almost every point of his legendarium. Apart from this contrasting phenomenon in his universe, Tolkien’s further ideas about the green world, planting more trees, gardens, or wild forests - very much like romantic ecology - creates a basis for his evaluation of fairy stories or fantasy narrations. Especially in his essay “On Fairy-Stories,” he explains how fairy stories should be welcomed as true narrations or the essential requirements for a well-employed fairy story. One of these requirements is “escape,” which resembles the phenomenon in romantic ecology mentioned above. Although this phenomenon is open to debate in many ways, Tolkien mentions it as an essential element for fairy stories.²³ That kind of escape Tolkien mentions involves a

²¹ He was last seen in the Shire while Old Took, Bilbo’s grandfather, was alive.

²² That kind of view can easily be seen in the Hobbits’ life style in Tolkien’s Middle-earth. It will be enhanced in the Chapter Two.

²³ By using “fairy-story,” Tolkien did not only intend to mean the well-known stories such as “Sleeping Beauty” or “Red-Riding Hood,” he meant also fantasy literature.

refusal to accept things the way they are: Escape provides the opportunity to be removed from the misery of the primary world.²⁴ Due to this, Tolkien's works can be regarded as escapist literature. However, this does not mean that Tolkien provides a different world from the real world – or the primary world in Tolkien's words. The reader still witnesses the misery or any other hardships while reading his works. In Ralph C. Wood's (2003) words: "[I]t is exactly this world of unprecedented evil—of extermination ovens and concentration camps, of terrorist attacks and ethnic cleansings, of epidemic disease and mass starvation and deadly material self-indulgence—that *The Lord of the Rings* addresses" (1). According to Wood's words, Tolkien creates the atmosphere of the century that he lived in, although it differed significantly from the other literary narrative techniques. Using fairy, he created a perilous world where the people suffer the same misery or have the same hope of the modern age. "Far from encouraging us to turn away from such evils, Tolkien's book forces us to confront them" (1), adds Wood (2003) to his former statement mentioned above. As a matter of fact, "[t]his great work enables us to escape *into* reality" (Wood, 2003: 1; emphasis in original). Concerning this "escape into reality," Tolkien's letters can give much information of how he is so near to Ruskin's ideas in terms of industrialization vs. the green world. To give an example: "I am (obviously) much in love with plants and above all trees, and always have been; and I find human maltreatment of them as hard to bear as some find ill-treatment of animals" (Carpenter, 2006: 220). More can be discovered in his history of Middle-earth. With the race of the Elves, Tolkien gives a hand to the conservation of the beauty of Middle-earth in contrast to the deforestation or mechanization of Melkor/Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman. Tolkien describes the Elves as pure scientists in terms of their approach to nature as such:

The Elves represent, as it were, the artistic, aesthetic, and purely scientific aspects of the Humane nature raised to a higher level than is actually seen in Men. That is: they have a devoted love of the physical world, and a desire to observe and understand it for its own sake and as 'other' [...] not as a material for use or as a power-platform (Carpenter, 2006: 236).

²⁴ The real world that we live in

Nevertheless, unfortunately, this effort of the Elves is not enough to preserve the beauty of Middle-earth. By the Third Age, Middle-earth ceases to be the world of the Elves and becomes dark under Sauron's shadow.

W. H Auden (2004), who defines Tolkien's world as pre-industrial in terms of technology, talks about the absence of "firearms" or "mechanical means of transport" in a world where "the arts of mining, metallurgy, architecture, road and bridge building" are so advanced (43). Melkor/Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman's powers grow in a world devoid of technology, even though the glorious cities of ancient times have turned into ruins or the old roads are now turning into dangerous ones. The power that Sauron and Saruman acquire in the Third Age is "which our civilization would call magical because it lacks them; telepathic communication and vision are possible, verbal spells are effective, weather can be controlled, rings confer invisibility" (Auden, 2004: 43). In a sense, contrary to the contribution of the Elves to the ecosystem of Middle-earth, dark forces like Melkor/Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman commit ecocide, one of the greatest sins of Middle-earth.

Committing ecocide also causes the destruction of the integrity of nature and the loss of balance in the harmony of organic and inorganic living beings. The assumption that inorganic beings have animation and that everything exists as a whole is reflected in Wordsworth's long poem *The Excursion*. For Ruskin, Wordsworth was both a poet and a philosopher, adding that *The Excursion* also reveals Wordsworth's philosophical side. Ruskin defines Wordsworth's philosophy as follows: "[T]here is an animation in and unity between all things, and that nature is accordingly entitled to moral consideration" (Bate, 1991: 66). In Derek Wall's *Green History: A Reader in Environmental Literature, Philosophy and Politics*, it can be seen that this idea is widely mentioned. Chapter seven of the book, called "Philosophical Holism," is very similar to Ruskin's definition of Wordsworth's philosophical poetry. Based on the term "holism" in green studies, Wall focuses on the people who gave importance to this term and offers examples from their writings. Among them are Jalal al-din Rumi (1207-73), the representative of Sufism and known for his *Mathnavi*, William Blake, Friedrich Engels, South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts (1879-1950) and Lewis Mumford (1895-1989), the ecosocialist. Among these, especially Jan Smuts' article "The holistic doctrine of ecology" draws attention to a subject that fits Wordsworth's philosophy, which Ruskin mentions. Smuts likens order to a pattern, and this pattern present in each unit is not an anthropomorphic manifestation but rather the connection that arises from

an active interaction of structures. Tracing these structures is to discover the beauty of the harmony created by connections, whether they are called “beauty,” “truth,” or “good.” As a result, they are all a whole and in harmony. No structure exists alone; they are all interconnected (Smuts, 1994: 93). These two ideas (Wordsworth’s idea of animation and Smuts’ idea of patterns) seem to be very close to each other because both ideas refer to living organisms and the environment as having a dynamic relationship with each other. Human beings can be the only living being that tends to disrupt this dynamic and circulating relationship because they try to make a place for themselves in this living mechanism, and attempt can spoil the function. As an admirer of Wordsworth, Ruskin dictates that man should be in harmony with nature in order to catch the essence, and the first rule to do this is to see because “[t]o see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion, - all in one” (Bate, 1991: 67).

In the modern age, the greatest factor in the loss of harmony with nature is assumed as modern science. With the improvements in modern science, mechanization is at the top of every labour. Not only machines do the work for individuals, but they also give a chance to human beings to dominate nature at the fullest scale. Mechanization, which comes with modern science and technology, has been one of the biggest problems of the modern age. Mechanization also leads to a negative perception in Tolkien’s legendarium, for which was created as a pre-industrial universe. Wood (2003) explains how Tolkien perceives modern science and technology as follows: “As Descartes famously said, the aim of modern science is to render us ‘masters and possessors of nature.’ No wonder that Tolkien regarded much of modern technology—precisely because it seeks to put nature under its command, speeding up its deliberate processes—as a disguised form of *magic* (29-30). Tolkien’s definition of “magic” in his essay “On Fairy-Stories” signifies what Wood states in the quotation above by pointing out that magic is different from enchantment due to the aim of their usage in the stories. To Tolkien, enchantment is a form that is made for an artistic purpose and affects the spectator’s senses in the “Secondary World.” Unlike enchantment, magic is a technique done in the “Primary World” to manipulate events and gain power (25). Therefore, it is not surprising to see Tolkien regards that modern science as a kind of magic. In this regard, modern science is used as a technique for some to make some alterations in this world and dominate things (for example, nature) in the end. However, this does not mean that modern science is pure evil and should be put aside immediately. Rather, the hands using it should be approached susceptibly. With the help of modern science and

technology, many effective inventions are welcomed and used worldwide. The improvements, especially in medicine, make some diseases disappear as much as possible. How and against whom it should be used is as much important as the improvement. Wood's (2003) example can give a more insightful approach to the matter: "Saruman has made his fortress at Isengard into a prison house of mechanical power. Like Sauron, he has created weapons of horror, thus perverting the good skills he learned from Aulë" (30). The skill that Saruman learned from Aulë is a priceless gift for Saruman, and he would use it to improve the general situation of Middle-earth to a better level. However, he decides to use it against all the beauties of Middle-earth and becomes one of the destructive figures in the land. What remains at last are "an industrial wasteland" and a "cheap copy" of Barad-dûr (Stanton, 2001: 58). The example that Curry (2004) gives such as "[t]he tiger is disappearing? Never mind, we'll preserve its frozen DNA. Later, we can see if we can reconstitute a wild animal without any habitat or ecosystem, learning, socialization or natural prey" (137; pagination is mine) reveals the illogicality of some future-based processes carried out by modern science. Likewise, this mechanization/magic-based advance carried out by Sauron and Saruman is sure to lead to even greater disasters in the future of Middle-earth that they will also suffer. This is exactly what White (1996) is also saying: "What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship. More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis" (12). However, the point to note here is not to show Tolkien as an enemy of mechanization or modern science. As John R. Holmes (2014) says, what Tolkien meant as "mechanization" or "machine" is not just a bias or hatred of technology. On the contrary, Tolkien's refusal to mechanize is what Holmes puts it: "What makes a machine potentially evil is, in Tolkien's phrase, an improper desire "to make the will more immediately effective" (Letters 145)" (143). Modern man, who was even more confused with the ambition created by this desire, tried to find the solution again in technology, but his "comfortable life amidst the conveniences of technology has caused him to suffer a spiritual death, to feel alienated, empty, without purpose and direction" (Fromm, 1996: 32). As mentioned above, the process of back to nature, which started with the Romantics, attributes nature to its spiritual healing role. In contrast, nature became an "economic resource" in the modern age. Moreover, "the most recent literary version of nature reflects that of a society which at some level understands itself to be living in what Bill McKibben has termed a 'postnatural world' and whose conscious need for

nature is merely superficial” (Deitering, 1996: 201). With the contribution of humanism, treating the human mind as the highest phenomenon and the “ego-consciousness” reflected in literary works as the greatest proof of critical success, the “ecoconsciousness” that stands out in nature-writings and regional literary works has always been ignored because “they do not seem to respond to anthropocentric - let alone modernist and postmodernist - assumptions and methodologies” (Love, 1996: 230). Although Tolkien seems to have achieved this in his works, the transition from ego-consciousness to ecoconsciousness seems to have a long way to go when it is looked at today’s works.

Somewhere in this invisible path, when the peculiar prefix of postmodernism is brought before humanism that puts man at the centre, a critical discourse that affects the relationship between organic/inorganic living beings and the whole universe has emerged. Although the post- prefix creates a “posthuman” meaning, there is no sign of a transhuman being in the discourse of posthumanism. On the contrary, within the framework of the discourse, posthumanism demolishes the concepts that have been the answer to “What is human?” until now and displays an attitude that puts man away from the centre. The idea that each being (organic or inorganic) within the existing universal cycle contributes has led to this. Therefore, the idea that no one has superiority over another plays a significant role in the central spread of posthumanism. In this context, it is an undeniable fact that in Tolkien’s legendarium, any race does not place itself at the centre of the universe and that each living/non-living being has a contribution within the cosmos. From this point of view, although Tolkien’s legendarium is very close to the discourse of posthumanism, it will be sufficient to briefly mention it as this is not the subject of the dissertation. Posthumanism, whose foundations were laid thanks to the new ideas put forward in the fields of biology, mechanics, and communication in the Macy Conferences held between 1946-1953, leads to a series of critical discourses such as abstracting itself from the concept of “perfect human” in opposition to transhumanism that feeds on humanism and removing “the human and *Homo sapiens* from any particularly privileged position” (Wolfe, 2010: xii). Unlike rational humanism, that is, perfecting the human species based on empirical and analytical thinking, posthumanism “proposes an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or ‘earth’ others, by removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism” (Braidotti, 2013: 49-50). Feeding on post-structuralism and postcolonialism, posthumanism tries to eliminate not only the discrimination between

living and non-living beings but also the discrimination between human races. As Donna J. Haraway (2008) states in her book *When Species Meet*, “[t]he discursive tie between the colonized, the enslaved, the noncitizen, and the animal—all reduced to type, all Others to rational man, and all essential to his bright constitution—is at the heart of racism and flourishes, lethally, in the entrails of humanism” (18).

Contrary to this distinction, names such as Shiva and Mies, who are ecological posthumanists, emphasize that the domination and exploitation of man (who is accepted as the measure of everything) over nature prevents respect for the diversity of all kinds of living/non-living beings and human races (Braidotti, 2013: 48). In this context, science and technology abuse this necessary respect, and “[b]oth of them involve epistemic and physical violence over the structural ‘others’” (Braidotti, 2013: 48). Alternatively, Shiva and Mies take a holistic approach to respect for both human and non-human beings, drawing on the concepts such as cosmology, anthropology, post-secular and feminist spirituality: “[A] reverence for the sacredness of life, of deeply seated respect for all that lives” (Braidotti, 2013: 48). As mentioned before, Tolkien is not such an abusive technology, science, and mechanization advocate; on the contrary, he had a vision of the world that was constructed on the value of each being with a holistic approach on the spirituality of the universe. Seen from this point of view, if Tolkien had lived today, he would have realized that he was taking a posthumanist perspective, and maybe he could give a speech on this view. In Tolkien’s legendarium, each community consists of people who are linked together by a cosmic chain. At the same time, it is evident that non-human beings, namely trees, flowers, horses, stones, mountains, and rivers, act as agents of this cosmology. Agency is not just an attitude peculiar to humans. Karen Barad (2007), an American feminist theorist, explains this in the book *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* as follows:

The world is an open process of mattering through which mattering itself acquires meaning and form through the realization of different agential possibilities [...] The changing topologies of the world entail an ongoing reworking of the notion of dynamics itself. Dynamics are a matter not merely of properties changing in time but of what matters in the ongoing materializing of different space-time topologies. The world is intra-activity in its differential mattering [...] This dynamism is agency. Agency is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfigurings of the world. The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming (141).

This intra-activity of materials is generated by the responses of these materials or inhuman beings. As long as they can respond (or be responsible), they have agency. (Haraway, 2008: 71). Serpil Oppermann (2013) explains the agency of the matters put forward by Jane Bennett, one of the new materialist theorists, along with Barad, who emphasizes this intra-acting agency:

She acknowledges their “ability to make something happen” (24) when these elements form assemblages with the human dimension. In Bennett’s view, agentic materiality induces “unforeseeable” changes in the world (63), because, she claims, “biochemical-social systems can sometimes unexpectedly [...] choose developmental paths that could not have been foreseen” (112). This entails a truly non-anthropocentric vision, pointing to how, to quote Bennett again, “human culture is inextricably enmeshed with vibrant, nonhuman agencies” (108) (56).

The “ability to make something happen” of matters, which Oppermann refers to Bennett, is a typical agency attitude in Tolkien’s legendarium. That in *The Hobbit*, the wizard Gandalf setting fire to cones with his wand, the waters of the Bruinen River in *The Lord of the Rings* being overflowed by Elrond and dragging the Ringwraiths, the Ents, namely the Shepherds of the Forests, and most importantly, the Ruling Ring trying to reach its owner using the person who wears it are examples of the agency of materials, which have the “ability to make something happen.” This shows us that Tolkien’s Elves, Wizards, Hobbits or Dwarves, and the inanimate materials in this universe interact or engage in a dialogue. Just as postmodernism is based on discourse, so posthumanism bases everything on matter, as in Braidotti’s (2013) own words: “The posthuman subjectivity I advocate is rather materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded, firmly located somewhere” (51). From this point of view, it can be said that the legendarium that Tolkien constructed is based on materiality rather than discourse.

On the other hand, transhumanism, which is considered the continuation of the Enlightenment period in general terms, aims to make human beings superior to non-human beings with technology and pushes the limits of domination over nature. Based on this, Melkor/Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman of Middle-earth can be called transhumanist individuals. Melkor captured a group of the Elves when they first awoke and created Orcs from them, which coincides with the idea of transhumanism because in transhumanism, “there is still a belief in the continuation of the carbon-based materiality

of the human body. However, [...] the human body is believed to be capable of transformation through enhancing or augmenting technologies” (Anderson, 2017: 19). How Melkor created the Orc race is explained in *The Silmarillion* as follows: “[T]hat all those of the Quendi²⁵ who came into the hands of Melkor, ere Utumno was broken, were put there in prison, and by slow arts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of the Orcs in envy and mockery of the Elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes” (Tolkien, 1999: 47). Melkor subjected the Elves he imprisoned in the cells of Utumno to various torture and mistreatment, transforming them into a completely different race to use in his war. However, in doing so, the physical qualities of the Elves (healthy and strong bodies) are preserved. Likewise, going even further, Saruman is known to subject Orcs to breeding with men he imprisons to strengthen the race further; for example, to enable them to move comfortably in daylight. This information Treebeard gives to Merry and Pippin is proof that Saruman has been doing this practice as such:

He is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment. And now it is clear that he is a black traitor. He has taken up with foul folk, with the Orcs. Brm, hoom!²⁶ Worse than that: he has been doing something to them; something dangerous. For these Isengarders²⁷ are more like wicked Men. It is a mark of evil things that came in the Great Darkness that they cannot abide the Sun; but Saruman’s Orcs can endure it, even if they hate it. I wonder what he has done? Are they Men he has ruined, or has he blended the races of Orcs and Men? That would be a black evil! (Tolkien, 2004: 473).

Treebeard is right to suspect because Sauron’s Orcs (which are also Melkor’s Orcs) cannot stand the light of day. That is the reason why they hide in the shadows and travel at night. However, Saruman tries to create a superior race among Orcs by blending Orcs and Men to make up for this “deficiency.” Nevertheless, this “deficiency” turns into a situation that also brings the end of Saruman.

Finally, I believe that it is essential for interdisciplinary studies to be carried out together to create environmental awareness, including current theories, and for each discipline to concentrate on this subject by feeding on other disciplines. It should not be

²⁵ The Elves

²⁶ For this is the sound of Treebeard, namely nature itself, it cannot be excluded from the quotation.

²⁷ The Orcs of Saruman

forgotten that all kinds of anthropological, economic, social, literary, biological, technological, and scientific ways should be guiding agents in terms of preventing environmental disasters. Instead of seeing nature as an entity outside of us, each of our cells is nature itself. Moreover, just as we are no different from mountains, stones, soil, flowers, insects, and viruses, we also do not have impermeable bodies. As in Barad's (2007) words, we do not have "self-contained existence" (ix).

1.2. Nature with/out Religion

How religions arose is tantamount to human history and is indented with how the first humans arose. When the lifestyles of human societies living in prehistoric times are examined, it is observed that they performed various rituals in order to give meaning to what was happening in their surroundings, they had a fearful respect for a "being" superior to them, and that they formed their social relations according to some moral codes. While these rituals are essential for understanding the belief system of communities, they are also helpful in understanding what "beings" they deemed sacred. These beings can often be animals, trees, mountains, plants, or pantheons of gods who have assumed anthropomorphic appearance. In general, it is seen that the connection of human beings with nature manifests itself in these belief systems, and events that are inaccessible to the human mind are called supernatural events.

From the beginning, while questioning how man was created or how this universe he lived in was formed, he always sought answers in nature. He found some natural phenomena in the direction of this cosmic questioning. Ongoing religious rituals and belief systems also emerged due to this questioning and affected the human position in the world. While some of these belief systems put human beings in a powerless position against nature, some - especially the religions considered sacred today and have scriptures - position man as the sole owner of this universe. According to this point of view, the position of nature has varied among human societies. However, no matter what, nature is always somewhere in these belief systems. What I mean to discuss here is this: Considering Tolkien's legendarium, it is to discuss the effect of the contact of various belief systems with nature, which have lost their influence and been accepted as myths. As a result, although some belief systems have tried to dominate nature, it will be revealed that a system without nature cannot exist, and nature has played an essential role in shaping people's religious rituals since the first humans.

1.2.1. Religion based on Nature

It does not matter what the name, form, or definition of the sacred is; human beings have found a way to believe in something divine or supernatural. As a historian of religions, Mircea Eliade analyses the various manifestations of the sacred in a chronological order in a third-volume work titled *A History of Religious Ideas*. He starts from the very early stages of human beings, namely from the Stone Age, and discusses how the sacred has been defined to manifest on the earth. With the help of this anthology of Eliade, the effects of some natural events or their occurrences on religious beliefs will be discussed.

Paleanthropians, namely prehistoric people, were hunters, and animals were sacred to them. Their hunting process was similar to religious rites because they believed that animals were “similar to men but endowed with supernatural powers” (Eliade, 1978: 7). Different supernatural beings, spirits, or divinities can be said to have existed for their religious ideas. The belief in the afterlife can be traced back to their times because Eliade draws attention to burials. The objects buried together with their owner may show that burial ceremonies were taken seriously and performed due to a profound belief. The beginning of agriculture was traced back to Mesolithic Age, about 8000 BC. The transition from hunting to agriculture did not immediately occur. There were still human communities that continued to live by hunting, but the vast majority were either driven to remote areas or protected the fields in villages. Citing the Indo-Europeans and Turko-Mongols as examples for the late-hunters of the Mesolithic Age, Eliade (1978) states that while these communities were carrying out their invasions and conquests, they continued these lifestyles “under the sign of the supreme hunter, the carnivore” (36). In addition, Eliade (1978) says that especially Indo-European troops and nomadic horsemen of Central-Asia did this with the imitation of a carnivorous predator while attacking the animals of people who transitioned to settled life, and that these aggressive tribes assumed the roles of predators in their religious rituals, and that “regarded themselves as descended from a theriomorphic mythical ancestor”: “The military initiations of the Indo-Europeans involved a ritual transformation into a wolf: the paradigmatic warrior appropriated the behavior of a carnivore” (36). As can be seen, late-hunting tribes seemed to have still had the idea that animals were the manifestation of a sacred being. To put it in other words, animals seemed to have embodied spirits belonging to a superior divine being. Eliade defines all these kinds of manifestations as “epiphany” in all his works.

Apart from epiphany, another term that Eliade quite uses is theophany, which is the manifestation of God to a person. He uses the latter term, especially when he mentions Yahweh and his first manifestation to Abraham. Together with all these manifestations, the “ritual transformation” that Eliade states above is an essential detail concerning eco-religious analyses of Tolkien’s legendarium. That is to say, the skin-changing process as a ritual transformation in Indo-Europeans takes part similarly in Tolkien’s Middle-earth. The character Beorn, a skin-changer, is a man, and he transforms into a bear. This transformation, however, does not happen because of a ritual aim. It is totally about military transformation because the meaning of the character’s name, Beorn, is a warrior. It derives from Old French baron: “nobleman, military leader, warrior, virtuous man, lord.”²⁸

Agriculture progressed very slowly, especially in Europe. One of the most important reasons for this was climatic conditions. However, although progress was slow, a unique agricultural civilization was formed there. Religious rituals based on agriculture were accessible in archaeological documents. At that time, people did not perform their religious rituals only on the ground. Especially the miners had their religious rituals because the discovery of metallurgy revealed a different religious set of rules. Until then, people could only smelt the meteor stones falling from the sky, which made the sky sacred for them.

When they discovered the underground of the earth, a return to the Earth’s womb began. As Eliade (1978) states, “[a]ll the mythologies of mines and mountains, the countless fairies, genii, elves, phantoms, and spirits, are the multiple epiphanies of the sacred presence that the individual confronts when he penetrates into the geological levels of Life” (53). He continues stating that this kind of ritual has a double association for metallurgists of that age and might have been condemned to be associated with the evil side. The metallurgists among Tolkien’s races are the Dwarves, who live in the mines that they have delved for ages by all means. As a consequence, what they have been left is just the presence of evil as follows: “The Dwarves tell no tale; but even as mithril was the foundation of their wealth, so also it was their destruction: they delved too greedily and too deep, and disturbed that from which they fled, Durin’s Bane. Of what they brought to light the Orcs have gathered nearly all, and given it in tribute to

²⁸ <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=beorn>

Sauron, who covets it” (Tolkien, 2004: 317).²⁹ The underground of the earth has always been identified as an unknown or partly-known sphere that human beings have not dominated chiefly and as a domain out of which evil creatures have been believed to spring.

Regarding this association and identification, metallurgists were a group of people who were both respected and avoided. In addition, the metallurgists identify with the blacksmiths and put the material existing in nature into different forms and generally have a negative connotation. Mentioning that metallurgists are “masters of fire” just like blacksmiths, Eliade (1978) emphasizes the importance of fire in converting one substance into another. Transforming a substance that exists in nature into a different substance leads to the perception of metallurgists, blacksmiths, smelters, shamans, medicine men, and magicians as “masters of fire” in human societies: “But the ambivalent character of metal - laden with powers at once sacred and demonic - is transferred to metallurgists and smiths: they are highly esteemed but are also feared, segregated, or even scorned” (54). It is known that Melkor/Morgoth, and Sauron are good blacksmiths in Tolkien’s legendarium. However, as Eliade states, these names have used fire to symbolize evil for their interests and tried to rule Middle-earth. From an environmental point of view, in underground works, the mine air causing toxic gases leads the people in the places where these studies are carried out to face life-threatening danger.³⁰ In this context, the underground has inevitably acquired a dangerous dimension in terms of environment and religion. Likewise, Arkenstone, which the Erebor dwarves found in the heart of the mountain, is a symbol of both religious and environmental destruction. With both name resemblance and structural and symbolic dimensions, Arkenstone is the Philosopher’s Stone of Middle-earth.

The “Doctrine of the Two Contraries,” which takes its roots from ancient Egypt, India, and China, was shaped by the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle with four essential elements: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. Behind these four elements, it is possible to talk about a fifth one likened to chaos and defined as “prima materia” by Aristotle but does not have any material existence until it takes shape. In addition, it was this “first matter” that allowed one element to transform into another “by a process of transmutation” (Read, 1995: 2-3). This theory of Aristotle influenced the scientific

²⁹ One of the ancient servants of Melkor, namely Balrogs, awoke when the dwarves delved deep into Moria in *The Lord of the Rings*.

³⁰ For further information: Durşen and Yasun (2012). *Yeraltı Madenlerinde Bulunan Zararlı Gazlar ve Metan Drenajı*, İğüm, Ankara.

history of the West until almost the seventeenth century. Although today's scientific world has refuted the transmutation of these four elements by suggesting, for example, that water can exist in either liquid, solid, or gaseous form, this theory is critical in terms of giving an idea about how the world was perceived and observed. Alchemy, which emerged with this connection, triggers the idea of reaching the perfection that has lasted for a long time, especially in Western thought, together with the idea of turning any substance in the earth into gold or silver through some processes. The last point reached in alchemy, namely the Philosopher's Stone, which is a symbol of perfection (Read, 1995: 29), gave people the opportunity to "observe" their environment while discovering the secrets of the universe, both in religious terms and environmental dimensions, and as a result, the alchemists thought that "what Nature cannot perfect in a vast space of time we can achieve in a short space of time by our art" (Eliade, 1988: 257). Alchemy, which is to interfere with the functioning system of nature, created the infrastructure of classical science and led to the exploitation of nature for many years.

Dwarves are not the only race in Middle-earth interested in precious stones. The Silmarils, which caused important events in Tolkien's legendarium and gave its name to the book *The Silmarillion*, were made in the Years of Trees by Fëanor, the wisest of the Noldor elves living in Valinor. These three jewels, also called The Great Jewels, were admired even by the Valar as they were made by securing the lights of Laurelin and Telperion Trees into jewels. Because of these three precious jewels, the Noldor elves, who migrated to Valinor, return to Middle-earth, where they awoke, because Melkor and Ungoliant both destroy the Two Trees and steal the Silmarils, and flee to Middle-earth. These Silmarils, which will determine the fate of Middle-earth throughout the ages, are the leading cause of the events that will happen to both Elves and other races in the following ages.

Another religious approach to the substance-filled underground is that this place is believed to be the land of the dead. In many mythological stories, the reason why the underground is seen as the realm of the dead is, as mentioned before, its obscurity and darkness. In many stories about this realm, it is seen that underground rituals are shaped according to this belief. One of these rituals can also be found in a story belonging to the Sumerians. Sumerian civilization was the most known and important one at the Mesopotamian region. Their religion was said to be the first institutionalized and systemized set of rules which were composed of a set of gods or a divinity pantheon. Among this pantheon, Inanna- Ishtar was the goddess of love and war, and a story

concerning her includes her descending into the underworld to displace her sister, whose name is Ereshkigal. The underworld was the land of the dead as it is always to be and additionally a territory that had its own rules. By passing through the Seven Gates, which “is clearly a worldwide symbol of wholeness” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 860), Inanna-Ishtar arrived naked before her sister, and there she was paralyzed by her. En-lil, the god of the atmosphere, and Nanna-sin, the god of the moon, did not take a step to settle the dispute because they thought that Inanna-Ishtar “sought to meddle with forbidden things” (Eliade, 1978: 64). Another aspect of the goddess and her journey into the underworld is that she went under, in a way, an initiation by passing through the gates. She was stripped of her clothes in the passage of each gate to the final destination where she had no more clothes, fully naked. Initiation ceremonies were an important part of ancient people’s religious rites, and they may have been practiced even by the divinities. Egyptian religion, similar to Sumerian, was especially the one that this kind of ceremonies was performed mostly, and pharaohs were the main figures in those ceremonies. The act of initiation, for a pharaoh, was a must in order to prove himself to be identified with divinity and Supreme Being. Specific tasks could have possibly been set for the pharaoh who “must have accomplished all the ritual purification (Pyr. 519, 1116) and, above all, must answer an interrogation of the initiatory type, that is to say, must answer by stereotyped formulas that served as passwords” (Eliade, 1978: 96). It seems possible to state that each character in the Fellowship of the Ring, formed by the representative of the races in Middle-earth to destroy the One Ring and Sauron, is under an act of initiation. Some examples of this act will be discussed in the analyses, but Gandalf’s act of initiation takes over the pharaoh’s initiatory type, which would be proper to mention. On their road to the land of Mordor, where Sauron lives and summon his army, the guide of the fellowship is Gandalf the Grey. Known for his close friendship with the hobbits, Gandalf decides to participate in the fellowship after Frodo Baggins is chosen as the bearer of the Ring. As a representative of the race of the wizards, Gandalf becomes the leader of the group, who leads the way and finds reasonable solutions to both physical and mental obstacles. On the gates of the Moria, one of the abandoned mines of dwarves, Gandalf, both as a leader of the group and actor of his initiation process, has to open the gates with magic: “Many times he repeated these words in different order, or varied them. Then he tried other spells, one after another, speaking now faster and louder, now soft and slow” (Tolkien, 2004: 307). In order to answer the passwords, the pharaoh (here Gandalf) was sometimes said to use

threats or magic because he was supposed to overcome death and reach the final destination of the initiation ceremony, which was a heavenly place. Sometimes, this initiation act was ended up oppositely, namely in death. The story of the murdered Egyptian king, Osiris, is an example of this kind of opposition in the finalization. His wife succeeded in conceiving a child by him after he was murdered, and she bore Horus, a rightful heir to the Egyptian empire. Horus achieved to awake his father from a powerless and motionless stance, namely from death, to a powerful and resurrected position. Osiris's transition from motionless soul to an incarnated body resulted in the fact that Osiris "takes over from Re the function of judge of the dead; he becomes the Master of Justice" (Eliade, 1978: 100). Although he seemed to fail his task as a king because he was murdered, he seemed to go under a different initiatory task which ended up not in heaven but the land of the dead. How Gandalf in Tolkien's Middle-earth ends up his act of initiation does not resemble both the pharaohs of Egypt or the Egyptian king, Osiris. The beginning of the process, namely answering the passwords or the middle of it, such as facing death, may look very similar; however, the ending is different. For the part of Gandalf the Grey, it should be said that he faces Balrog,³¹ an evil creature, under the depths of Moria. Within an ace of winning the battle, he and Balrog fall into the depths beneath Moria. Since then, the Fellowship of the Ring continues their journey without their leader, which causes them to lose their way and the fellowship members to separate from each other in the end. Surprisingly, Gandalf is sent back to Middle-earth to complete his task. When Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli – these three members of the fellowship stay together after separation – ask what has happened to him, he answers: "[D]arkness took me, and I strayed out of thought and time, and I wandered far on roads that I will not tell. Naked³² I was sent back – for a brief time, until my task is done" (Tolkien, 2004: 502). Gandalf cannot describe what has happened to him after he falls with Balrog. The only thing he knows is that he is saved and sent for a purpose. Although this situation, which is obviously a divine purpose, is interpreted in a simple way by Gandalf, Wood (2003) states that Gandalf reaches a level in the realm of wisdom and is sent back to Middle-earth by reincarnation: "[H]e too experiences enormous moral transformation, even a virtual apotheosis—from Gandalf the Grey to Gandalf the White" (85). From this point of view, the return of Gandalf

³¹ "Demons of fire that served Morgoth. The name is Sindarin Elvish, meaning 'Demon of Might'. In being, balrogs are Maiar, and carry whips of flame. The Balrog killed by Gandalf in *The Lord of The Rings* survived the destruction of Morgoth's stronghold in the First Age" (Duriez, 2001: 68).

³² Like Inanna-Ishtar.

from his long trance and sleepy state to Middle-earth as Gandalf the White is similar to Osiris's return as "Master of Justice."

In a belief mentioned about the realm of the dead, the burial places also become an indispensable part of these belief systems. In some regions - such as the pyramids of the Ancient Egyptians - burial sites raise as magnificent structures, while in some, they are located in the middle of the living spaces of communities. However, Megaliths, namely the burial places, of the European and Mediterranean territories are also as famous as pyramids and were built out of stone. Stonehenge, for instance, is a part of this megalithic complex. Here, Eliade (1978) focuses more on the material that was used for the construction of the megaliths because "the rock, the slab, the granite block reveal duration without end, permanence, incorruptibility – in the last analysis a modality of *existing* independently of temporal becoming" (115; emphasis in original). Unlike the life of a human being, which is vulnerable to end in the blink of an eye, the material used in burial places stands for the eternal strength of the dead soul. This idea did only belong to megalithic construction because of the belief in the afterlife and ancestors. The belief in the afterlife in Greeks and Mesopotamians was more shadowy and powerless in terms of souls. Although the spread of megalithic structures into such vast geography and the use of stone or granite blocks in all structures without exception make the question of the existence of a megalithic religion, what is more important is that people who were still alive felt themselves tied to their ancestors through the agency of stone and that souls complemented the living ones. Megalithic construction did not stand all alone on the ground in the Mediterranean territory. They were encircled by menhir and dolmens, which were again made out of stones and provided a ceremonial place for the people. In other words, people created a living place for themselves and put the megalithic complex in the centre of their small villages. However, the megalithic complex in the ancient Indian civilization led people to build their first big cities, and they were encircled by bigger ceremonial buildings such as sanctuaries. In Tolkien's legendarium, the burial place marked with obelisks in a very similar way is the famous Barrow-downs. This area, which was used as the burial place of the Men in the First Age of Middle-earth, was later captured by the barrow-wights during the time of the Witch-king Angmar. As described in *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo and his friends, after leaving Bombadil's house, lose their way and enter this territory due to the fog. A standing stone that Frodo sees as an illusion emphasizes the religious importance of this region as follows: "In the midst of it there stood a single

stone, standing tall under the sun above, and at this hour casting no shadow. It was shapeless and yet significant: like a landmark, or a guarding finger, or more like a warning” (Tolkien, 2004: 137). But here it is striking how this burial and ritual site was possessed by evil and how these stones were used by barrow-wights as a spell:

*Cold be hand and heart and bone,
and cold be sleep under stone:
never mare to wake on stony bed,
never, till the Sun fails and the Moon is dead.
In the black wind the stars shall die,
and still on gold here let them lie,
till the dark lord lifts his hand
over dead sea and withered land* (Tolkien, 2004: 141).

In this song, sung by a barrow-wight, there is black magic that captivates the listener. That is why “Frodo felt as if he had indeed been turned into stone by the incantation” (Tolkien, 2004: 141). When Frodo, who is more capable than the other hobbits, regains consciousness, he remembers Bombadil’s song that they should sing if they need help and calls Bombadil to help him with this song. With Bombadil’s help, Frodo rescues the other three hobbits from the downs and witnesses Bombadil driving the barrow-wights away with a song. When the barrow-wights move away, the spell on the three hobbits disappears, and Merry’s dream under spell recalls the importance of these stones:

‘What in the name of wonder?’ began Merry, feeling the golden circlet that had slipped over one eye. Then he stopped, and a shadow came over his face, and he closed his eyes. ‘Of course, I remember!’ he said. ‘The men of Carn Dûm came on us at night, and we were worsted. Ah! the spear in my heart!’ He clutched at his breast. ‘No! No!’ he said, opening his eyes. ‘What am I saying? I have been dreaming’ (Tolkien, 2004: 143).

When Frodo finds three hobbits sleeping unconscious, he also discovers a treasure above their bodies and where they lie down. When the hobbits are all awake, Bombadil brings these treasures to light. He says that this treasure belongs to the “Men of Westernesse” (Tolkien, 2004: 146). In those times, these people were enemies of Carn Dûm, ruled by the Witch-king Angmar. In this context, Shippey (2007) interprets Merry’s dream as follows: “While Merry is asleep he seems to have been possessed by the spirit of a man of Westernesse, and he relives the latter’s death-agony when he

wakes” (261). Eliade’s use of these stones to connect the living with dead souls, as mentioned above, and thus the material used to keep the souls of the dead alive forever, seems to be valid in this burial place of Middle-earth as well.

Except for stone, rocks, and granite blocks, caves were also used as graveyards. While the megalithic structures emerged from the hands of humans, the caves are a geographic formation and, in particular, had a natural graveyard characteristic of the Greek islands and the Aegean region. Another feature of the caves was that they were suitable places for initiation ceremonies as Eliade (1978) states: “[C]aves played a religious role from the Paleolithic. The labyrinth takes over and enlarges this role; entering a cave or a labyrinth was equivalent to descent into Hades, in other words, to a ritual death of the initiatory type” (131).³³ The island of Crete was especially known for the mythological story of the labyrinth of the monster Minotaur, which was said to have been done by Daedalus both as a home and prison. Seven youths and seven maidens sent off from Athens were offered to the Minotaur, and this offering was an example of an initiation ceremony. As it is said before, not everyone could complete the ritual and end up in a heavenly place. It was only Theseus, a great hero, who entered the labyrinth of the Minotaur, achieved to kill the monster and escape the labyrinth. In a way, that is why Theseus was called and known as a great hero who could complete his initiatory act and who was glorified in the end. Caves and caverns are also mostly used by Tolkien in his legendarium. In the First Age, Melkor, the first Dark Lord, used the caves as dwelling places. As the cave is equivalent descent to Hades, the caves of Middle-earth were occupied by Melkor and his followers.³⁴ The inside of a cave that Melkor inhabited is represented as follows:

³³ Likewise, Joseph Campbell (2004) mentions in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* that the journeys made by the heroes to caves or underground are frequently seen in myths and that such places are considered important thresholds that the hero must cross (90). Especially from the psychoanalytic perspectives suggested by Freud and Jung, caves are identified with the mother archetype. Therefore, caves also represent the womb. From this point of view, caves are the projection of fertility in nature. With the identity of the womb, they remind the “before life,” and with the identity of the grave, they remind the “afterlife.” In philosophy, the approach to the cave has gained a different dimension with the “cave allegory” in Plato’s *The Republic*. In the “Theory of Forms,” Plato likens the cave to an instrument that hides truth from humanity. If a person does not know the truth, he is like a slave living in a cave. When he perceives the truth, then he is released from the cave.

³⁴ The caves where Melkor dwelt should not be confused with the caves where the Elves have lived in the First and Third Ages. The caves of the Elves are underground cities built to protect themselves from the wrath of Melkor, and the beauty of creation is preserved in those cities, but Melkor dwelt in caves created by natural formation. The cave life of the Elves will be discussed in Chapter Two.

[N]ow they follow Manwë and his herald into the caverns of the North. There sat Melkor in his chair, and that chamber was lit with flaming braziers and full of evil magic, and strange shapes moved with feverish movement in and out, but snakes of great size curled and uncurled without rest about the pillars that upheld that lofty roof (Tolkien, 1992: 103).

Rather than the celestial manifestation that Manwë represents, the caves are places where Melkor could practice metallurgy and blacksmithing as “the master of fire.” It is not surprising that snakes, an archaic beast, were also found in the caverns of Melkor as described. The inhabitation of caves or caverns by evil creatures continues in the Third Age of Middle-earth. In *The Hobbit*, Tolkien (1976) explains the “dangerous part about caves” as such: “you don’t know how far they go back, sometimes, or where a passage behind may lead to, or what is waiting for you inside” (66-7). Furthermore, he (1976) continues as in the following:

Even in the tunnels and caves the goblins have made for themselves there are other things living unbeknown to them that have sneaked in from outside to lie up in the dark. Some of these caves, too, go back in their beginnings to ages before the goblins, who only widened them and joined them up with passages, and the original owners are still there in odd corners, slinking and nosing about (78-9).³⁵

As seen in the quotation above, Tolkien alludes to the First Age and Melkor as the first settler of the caves. Apart from this, it is a possibility that the first representatives of evil can be found in the endless parts of the caves.

Contrary to the negative connotation reflected by caves where the sun does not enter, mountains and especially peaks have been the most suitable areas for direct contact with the god or gods. It is a fact that mountain peaks are also perceived as the centre of the world. According to what Eliade (1988) says, meeting heaven with a mountain is a macrocosmic situation. At the microcosmic level of this situation, a “central pillar of the dwelling-place or the highest opening of the tent” is taken as a basis. These dwelling-places or mountains enable communication with god/s, or god/s also make/s these houses, altar spaces, and tents the centre of the world (7). Mountains, where the sky and the earth meet, serve a cosmic purpose in this context. The fact that Gandalf, Bilbo, and the dwarves, as described in *The Hobbit*, is rescued from the Wargs

³⁵ The Orcs in Tolkien’s Middle-earth corpus are named goblins in *The Hobbit*.

and Goblins by the Eagles, and the Eagles carry this company to the highest place of the mountain mean that they receive divine help because the Eagles are the birds in Manwë's service. Apart from that, Manwë and some of the other Valar reside at the top of the mountain they created in Aman. Moreover, this mountain is said to be Arda's tallest mountain: "Their halls are above the everlasting snow, upon Oiolossë, the uttermost tower of Taniquetil, tallest of all the mountains upon Earth" (Tolkien, 1999: 16). Mountains are significant to Manwë; therefore, the mountains in Arda become cosmically important. As a celestial god, Manwë chooses the Eagles as the guardians of the mountains: "In the mountains the Eagles shall house, and hear the voices of those who call upon us" (Tolkien, 1999: 41). Therefore, in Middle-earth, mountains give a sense of fear of divine power and serve as natural girdles to protect much secrecy. Mountain passes are always difficult and dangerous, either because of the many evils that lie deep within them, or because of the domination of the divine power provided by their peaks. Bilbo's change of mood as he attempts to cross the Misty Mountains with the dwarves is linked to the clash of divine powers that take place on the mountaintop. Changing weather conditions as a manifestation of this clash make it difficult for the company to cross the mountains: "[Bilbo] knew that something unexpected might happen, and he hardly dared to hope that they would pass without fearful adventure over those great tall mountains with lonely peaks" (Tolkien, 1976: 65). Likewise, the inside of the mountain is just as dangerous as the top: "Some of these caves,³⁶ too, go back in their beginnings to ages before the goblins, who only widened them and joined them up with passages, and the original owners are still there in odd corners, slinking and nosing about" (Tolkien, 1976: 79). But, as noted above, the Eagles that inhabit the top of the mountains rush to help when needed, as Manwë mentioned before: "'What's all this uproar in the forest tonight?' said the Lord of the Eagles. He was sitting, black in the moonlight, on the top of a lonely pinnacle of rock at the eastern edge of the mountains. 'I hear wolves' voices! Are the goblins at mischief in the woods?'" (Tolkien, 1976: 107).

Moreover, finally, Sauron, who uses Mount Doom for his purposes as it is the symbol of his will of the divine and sovereign power, forges the One Ring in the fire of this mountain. Located in the land of Mordor, the east of Middle-earth, this mountain vomits continuous flame and ash as a representation of Sauron's evil rule. Frodo and

³⁶ The caves inside the mountains

Sam's ascent to Mount Doom is more like a descending into the underground city of the dead rather than a divine meeting on the top of the mountain. The casting of the Ruling Ring in the fire of Mount Doom brings the end of Sauron, which means Sauron's physical end, and the destruction of the ruling territory he represents. So, when the One Ring falls into the fire of Mount Doom, the mountain is destroyed because, according to Eliade (1978), "the mountain is a celestial symbol, for a sovereign god its loss is equivalent to his fall" (153). Apart from these, the mountains have sometimes become secret settlements to hide from evil. The best example is Gondolin, which Turgon founded in the valley within the Encircling Mountains in the First Age before Beleriand was destroyed. Gondolin, also known as the "The Hidden City," escaped Melkor/Morgoth's eyes for a long time and was also guarded by the Eagles of Thorondor.

In contrast to all these cosmic manifestations, the religious symbolism of forests is slightly different from stones, caves, and mountains. The manifestation of forests is based entirely on the spirits it contains. As in all world mythologies, Tolkien's forests are full of spirits. Although some of these spirits have evolved in a good way, most of them have their origins in cosmic evil. In this context, the completion of initiations in forests makes sense in repelling the evil that these spirits have brought forth. The fact that the trees are alive frequently encountered in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* reveals that there is either a good or evil spirit in them. Instead of collaborating, these spirits in the trees each have their cosmic energy, but as a result, the whole of the forests turn into a place of spirits. Eliade (1958) draws attention to Liungman's statement, which debunked the collective tree spirits, which was Mannhardt's argument:

[A]s Liungman points out (vol. i, p. 336), such a collectivization or "totalization" of individual "spirits" cannot be deduced from the facts. Mannhardt argued along the rationalist, associationist lines of his day. By a series of artificial combinations he recreated in his own way the phenomenon he was proposing to explain: the "spirit of the tree" would give rise to a "spirit of the forest" which, in its turn, would merge with the "spirit of the wind" and produce a "general spirit of vegetation." (363).

The eventual transformation of these spirits, enumerated by the collective spirit understanding proposed by Mannhardt, into vegetation spirits is not very valid in Tolkien's Middle-earth forests. Although the mating of Manwë, the god of the wind,

and Yavanna, the goddess of the vegetation, is important in the cosmogony of Arda, the contribution of these gods in the formation of the spirits of these forests is open to discussion. Because, as stated before, each of these spirits in the forest has different origins, and their contribution or opposition to cosmic creation also comes from these origins. Speaking of the spirit of trees and forests, it is necessary to elaborate on the religious uses of the distinction between *spiritus*, *pneuma*, and *ruach*.

1.2.2 Types of Spirit: *spiritus*, *pneuma*, *ruach*

In ancient mythologies, the spirit is an essential phenomenon so that it even holds the origin of every creation. Ancient civilizations gave great importance to it compared with the body. It is believed chiefly that spirit comes first, and without spirit, the body cannot do anything. In the creation myths of these civilizations, the spirit is used as a tool for primordial beings to realize their plans and designs about the universe. According to the distinctive regions, the word “spirit” changes. The word “*spiritus*” was used in Latin, meaning “spirited, animated.”³⁷ “*Pneuma*” comes from Greek and has a meaning as such: “a blowing, a wind, blast; breeze; influence; breathed air, breath; odor, scent; spirit of a person; inspiration, a spirit, ghost,”³⁸ and “*ruach*” is coming from Anglo-French and means “animating or vital principle in man and animals.”³⁹ The first word is generally used in the same meaning as “spirit,” which is used today. Unlike “*spiritus*,” “*pneuma*” has a deeper meaning as it should be understood from the definition given above. Before diving into the deeper meaning behind “*pneuma*,” it should be stated that soul and spirit are different phenomena. While the soul is “the principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans, regarded as a distinct entity separate from the body,”⁴⁰ spirit is “the principle of conscious life; the vital principle in humans, animating the body or mediating between body and soul.”⁴¹ The most relatable word used for “*pneuma*” is “breath,” which is more inclined to religious beliefs. The Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato thought that “*pneuma*” resides in the human seed which is situated inside the genital organs. Breath comes from and out the genital organs as Eliade (1978) quotes Onians’ words as such:

³⁷ <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=spiritus>

³⁸ <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=pneuma>

³⁹ <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=ruah>

⁴⁰ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/soul?s=t>

⁴¹ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/spirit?s=t>

As Onians points out, for Plato the *psyche* is “seed,” *sperma* (*Timaeus* 73c), “or rather is in the ‘seed’ (91a), and this ‘seed’ is enclosed in the skull and spine (73 ff.). [...] It breathes through the genital organ (91b). [...] That the seed was itself breath or had breath (*pneuma*) and that procreation itself was such a breathing or blowing is very explicit in Aristotle” (112; emphasis in original).

As evident in the quotation above, “pneuma” is related to the human seed, an apparent link to a divine being. Accordingly, the existence of “pneuma” (or breath) is linked to the existence of a divinity. Wood (2003), too, emphasizes this link by referring to Owen Barfield in such words as:

Owen Barfield, the one real philosopher among the Oxford Inklings, made a similar point about the Latin *spiritus* and the Greek *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruach*. Unlike our one-dimensional word *spirit*, these three antique words mean wind-breath-spirit simultaneously. For ancient Greeks and Romans and Israelites to have uttered such words was for them to have experienced—without any disjunction—the tremendous power of natural force, the invisible sign of human life, as well the nearness and might of divine reality (33-4; emphasis in original).

Although the link is exemplified only through “pneuma,” it is apparent in the quotation that each word has been used consciously by referring to a divine being. As the thesis of this dissertation suggests that nature is a part of divinity or as a whole, the divine being itself, *spiritus*, *pneuma*, or *ruach* in Tolkien’s *legendarium* are right in the nature seed. Every time the characters go inside a forest in Middle-earth, they think as if the trees were alive or breathing. Furthermore, the Ents are the animated spirit of the Fangorn Forest and the shepherds of it. In this context, it can be mentioned that Ents are a *genius loci*.⁴² The place of such spirits in the ecological system is vital. As White (1996) mentions, “[i]n Antiquity every tree, every spring, every stream, every hill had its own *genius loci*, its guardian spirit” (10; emphasis in original) that people could also feel. That is why it was so essential to soothe and calm these guardian spirits before trees were cut down, mountains were pierced, or dams were built.⁴³

⁴² Spirit of the place

⁴³ Cutting trees is even regarded as “matricide” in some archaic communities. James George Frazer (2012) adds that “Siamese monks, believing that there are souls everywhere and that to destroy anything whatever is forcibly to dispossess a soul, will not break a branch of a tree ‘as they will not break the arm of an innocent person.’” (60).

This belief, which was called pagan animism, disappeared, especially with Christianity, and natural objects were allowed to be exploited with indifference to their emotions (White, 1996: 10). Another problem with Christianity - although it seems religious, it is linked to ecology - is the belief that God as the sole creator is separate from humans and does not receive any assistance in creation. Man, who is in the shadow of his creator, does not contribute anything to creation, while “the non-Christian tribal person assumes a place in creation that is dynamic, creative, and responsive.”⁴⁴ Further, tribal people allow all animals, vegetables, and minerals (the entire biota, in short) the same or even greater privileges than humans” (Allen, 1996: 243). This understanding provides a very good example of how these people combined religion and environmental awareness at one point. Although it is thought that they lacked science and technology, the curiosity of these tribal people towards nature led to both their observation and interpretation of nature and reinforcement of their religious aspects. The vitality and holiness of nature have been seen as an inseparable whole, and a two-dimensional world view has emerged. Scientific approach, on the one hand, and religious feelings, on the other hand, has gone a long way together.

1.3. Theory of Spirit: Bio-religious Nature

Derek Wall, a Green politician, discusses the political perspective of environmental problems and tries to seek the basis for human beings’ reactions to environmental degradation. Although this dissertation does not deal with political issues on environmental problems, what Wall explains in his book are worthy enough to set a link to the core of this study. Although he is one of them, Wall (1994) states the fact that Green politicians stand forward for only they see nature as “alive, vital and worthy of reverence” by rejecting “the notion of nature spirits or a conscious Earth Goddess” (4). Donald Worster, a professor at the University of Kansas, USA, is one of the leading figures who has pointed out the importance of environmental history and influenced Wall’s field of study. In his book, *Nature’s Economy: The Roots of Ecology*, he (1977) mentions that natural history essay emerged after Gilbert White’s book *Natural History of Selbourne* in which he reports what he has seen on his daily travels to nature. The book is a scientific report of “wildlife, seasons and antiquities” of Selbourne (5). In this

⁴⁴ This is also true in Tolkien’s legendarium. In the creation of the universe, each unit contributes to its dynamics, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

regard, the natural environment in Tolkien's Middle-earth is very similar to White's report in terms of presenting holism in nature.

It is a fact that Tolkien presents the vivid picture of nature in Middle-earth both as a naturalist and a writer. He does not only paint the scene in order for the reader to visualize (and also to hear and touch with other senses) but also achieves to create the effect that all the flowers, plants, trees, or animals are alive and breathe there in literal meaning. As Curry (2004) states, "there is much evidence of an active animism, a natural world that is literally alive" (184). This animism is also argued by Wood (2003) in such words as:

The lowest of things are the inert minerals of the earth, and yet even they contain precious stones that can be hewn and polished into things of great beauty—just as they can also become objects of an enslaving lust. Above them are the various plants, many of them essential to healing. Trees, as we have seen, are the most magnificent botanical species, and their caretakers the Ents are among Tolkien's most original creations. Higher still are the many kinds of animals, not only because they are mobile but also because many of them possess the consciousness that makes them real companions. Horses are perhaps the most splendid of Tolkien's animate creatures, and they remain central to Tolkien's world—whether in Gandalf's swift Shadowfax or Sam's humble pony Bill (38-9).

Tolkien approaches the issue like a naturalist, as stated above, who observes nature and presents it as it would have always been there, even if it had not been mentioned. Therefore, he cares about the ecosystem much (as a naturalist) and shows it in his fiction (as a writer). Just as Gilbert White tries to show his observations both scientifically and religiously, Tolkien tries to show both his universe's biological and religious aspects.

Heavily influenced by White's scientific and religious approach to nature, natural history essayists emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, among whom there were John Burroughs, John Muir, W. H. Hudson, and Richard Jeffries. According to Worster (1977), the intention of these essayists "became religious and spiritual as much as scientific" (16). This "spiritual" intention is the core of Wall's studies on nature because he is after this "spirit" in today's world of the green movement. The spiritual embracement of nature began to be lost with industrialism, and the idea that nature had a spirit was placed with the idea that nature had a mechanism.

Furthermore, natural history essayists, especially John Burroughs, suggests that “the philosophy of vitalism [was] propounded by the French neo-Romantic Henri Bergson. Vitalism was the view that plants and animals act according to an indwelling, mysterious power that physics and chemistry cannot analyze” (Worster, 1977: 17). In addition to Burrough’s vitalistic point of view, Hudson also believes in one unifying spirit that combines human beings and other living organisms.

Accordingly, Derek Wall creates a link between pastor-naturalists and today’s Green Politicians because he believes that the base for the Green Movements all over the world lies in ancient and prehistory. Before the action, philosophy has been there for the ecology and created a justified base for today’s Green activists. As Worster (1977) states, “the term ‘ecology’ did not appear until 1866, and it took almost another hundred years for it to enter the vernacular. But the idea of ecology is much older than the name” (viii). “Quasi-religions” such as “Buddhism, Gnosticism, the Kabbala, Neoplatonism, Sufism and Taoism” and “a philosophy of holism” supported by some Romantics such as William Blake have influenced “ecological science” (Wall, 1994: 4). Moreover, without ecological science, the Green Movement cannot be mentioned. Anthropocentrism, rejected by the Romantics, was also disapproved by the Green activists. However, “Christian pastoralism,” mentioned by Worster (1977), was both an anti-way of living to pastor-naturalists that began with Gilbert White and an anthropocentric life of style. Christianity, like the primarily other accepted religions, suggests that “nature’s chief function is to serve man’s need” (27).

A Christian figure like Jesus Christ, who was also a shepherd, was accepted to be a protector of human beings. For this reason, the good shepherd’s “pastoral duties have been limited to ensuring the welfare of his human charges, often in the face of a nature that has been seen as corrupt and predatory” (Worster, 1977: 27). Wall’s (1994) characterization of today’s Green Politics’ seeing nature as “alive,” “vital,” and “worthy of reverence” is resulted in a “pagan love of all life” (4). Natural-pastoralists like Gilbert White is attributed to be pagan when compared to Christian pastoralists, explains Worster (1977), adding that “the rediscovery of pagan literature in the eighteenth century was primarily about: a longing to reestablish an inner sense of harmony between man and nature through an outer physical reconciliation” (10). The spiritual hold of nature did not lose its way only with industrialism. Christianity’s indifference to nature made it happen fast with its “detached, external view of nature” (Worster, 1977: 28). Another contribution of Christianity to the perception of nature

was to give it a name, which is “ecology.” Although it may be shocking to hear how Christianity contributed to this name, Worster (1977) explains the process as follows:

As early as 1530 the word “oeconomy”, as employed in the title of Linnaeus’ essay, was used to refer to the art of household management. Derived from the Greek word *oikos*, or house, it was eventually extended to mean the political administration of all the resources of a community or state for orderly production. Along another line of development, theologians had long made the Latin *oconomia* interchangeable with God’s “dispensations,” and by the seventeenth century “oeconomy” was frequently employed to refer to the divine government of the natural world [...] Throughout the eighteenth century, the phrase incorporated portions of all these definitions to denote the grand organization and government of life on earth: the rational ordering of all material resources in an interacting whole (37).

When it comes to the nineteenth century, the phrase was replaced by the word “ecology,” based upon “Christian view of nature” (Worster, 1977: 37). Turning back to the eighteenth century here will be helpful in order to observe how the economy of nature was brought to the point of the mechanism by some of the followers of Linnaeus. They stated that nature is like a machine without any divine intervention, which paved the way to atheism. On the other hand, some tried to propose an alternative to this mechanistic outlook, which was again a return to Gilbert White’s arcadian outlook. The terms like spirit or soul of nature came to light along with the vitalism and indwelling powers. As Worster (1977) states, these terms “would become, especially for Romantics, the basis for opposition [...] to mechanistic science” (42). However, in the end (through the end of the eighteenth century), nearly all naturalists agreed upon the fact that nature was a place full of raw materials and ready to be exploited (Worster, 1977: 52-3).

Quite shockingly, Worster concludes the economy of nature in the eighteenth century by saying that it was not probably the Christian view of nature that led the way to exploit the environment, and he asks: May it be the pagan or arcadian view of nature that prepared the ground? The answer to this question can only be found in the succession of the arcadian view of nature.

In the nineteenth century, Henry David Thoreau was the successor of White’s Arcadian tradition regarding naturalists. As White had done in Selbourne, Thoreau

made ecological expeditions in the field at Concord, USA. Worster included quotes from Thoreau's journals and letters to present how Thoreau succeeded White's pastoral-naturalist view explicitly. One of these quotes in Worster's book (1977) is about the spirit of nature as such: "The earth I tread on is not a dead, inert mass,' he [Thoreau] maintained in 1851, 'it is a body, has a spirit, is organic, and fluid to the influence of its spirit, and to whatever particle of that spirit is in me.'" (79). Thoreau both seeks after and believes in the spirit of nature which was believed to have been lost through the end of the eighteenth century along with the mechanistic view of nature. Why the spirit of nature is crucial for the arcadian or pastoral naturalists is another critical question. Worster (1977) again mentions one of Thoreau's journals in which he, in a way, answers this question: "Without that sense of the vital energy in nature, man stands as an alien, severed even from the cold, inert lump of his own body" (80). The race of the Orcs in Tolkien's Middle-earth can be examined through this kind of alienation and lacking the vital energy coming out of nature. One way or another, all the races in Middle-earth have a connection with nature. However, the Orcs are the ones who are ranged with "desolate places where nature is under siege," says Campbell (2014) in "Nature" (436). The land where the ecological system is restricted or blocked to some extent – for "[v]ulnerable and mutilated though it might be, nature was obviously resilient and tenacious if not pressed too hard" (Worster, 1977: 68), the vital energy or the spirit of nature will be restricted, as well. Henceforth, the Orcs' dwelling places in Middle-earth are those out of which the spirit or energy cannot find a way to come. In a place like that, the individual or a living being does not connect itself to nature or the ecological system that it belongs. Such disconnectedness brings along with itself the alienation that Thoreau mentions above. As alienated and evil like creatures, they do not have their homelands as Thomas Honegger (2004) mentions in his "From Bag End to Lórien: the Creation of a Literary World" as follows:

The orcs, in contrast to the even least stationary of the free peoples (mankind), do not enter into a creative interaction with their environment. We never encounter them in their original homeland, if there is such a thing at all – which is to be doubted [...] it is typical for them that they are unable to interact positively with their surroundings. All they can achieve is the destruction and perversion of the places they take over (77-8).

As apparent in the quotation above, the Orcs are known to bring destruction to Middle-earth and lose the connection with nature. Furthermore, their alienated position is strengthened by their lack of homelands, which means that they do not belong anywhere and have roots on the earth. For they are also “secondary creations by Melkor” (Honegger, 2004: 77), they can be labelled as “inorganic” bodies, which Thoreau names the term as a situation of losing the connection to nature (Worster, 1977: 80).⁴⁵

As mentioned before, the arcadian naturalists believe that there is a vital force that unifies all organisms in one, and this force is the source of all kinds of energy that are to be found on the earth. In contrast to the mechanistic view of nature in the eighteenth century, this vital force, as a kind of spirit, “binds all species of the earth together in a unified organism” (Worster, 1977: 81). A force reigns in Tolkien’s Middle-earth, as well; however, it is an evil one. Dark Lord Sauron, titled as Ring-maker, is the one who gives birth to this evil force in Middle-earth. Having forged the Ruling Ring and other Rings of Power, he creates a supreme power of his own by pouring his evil nature into them. The famous lines in the One Ring explicitly show this evil force: “One Ring to rule them all, One ring to find them / One ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them” (Tolkien, 2004: 50). The process seems similar to the arcadian way of an ecological system; however, the intention is contrary. The only thing that Sauron wants is to rule the world as a dictator. In order to do this, he has forged the Rings of power, and the One Ring for those who wear them is going to be under his spell. Binding all species or races of the earth may be a perfect idea in the name of the ecological system; however, binding the races and species in darkness is not the one to be wanted and expected by them in Middle-earth. A dark army consisting of Orcs and other secondary creatures and an alliance with the Wizard Saruman, Sauron prepares for the one and big war against all the races in Middle-earth. The destruction created on nature even while forming an army is just the slightest one if he wins the war and Middle-earth falls. Campbell (2014) emphasises this fact by stating as such:

[T]he corruption and devastation of landscapes is on the move and it is tied to the pursuit of domination. Indeed the desolation we see in Fangorn, Isengard, and the Shire has all seeped forth from Barad-dûr [...] A self-serving desire for power at all costs has spread like pollution across the land, threatening, corrupting and destroying everything in its path, including the natural enclaves of the world (439).

⁴⁵ This is evidenced by the fact that Orcs were created by a transhumanist method.

This kind of pursuit of domination may resemble the anthropocentric view of nature, in which humanity has a dominant force and power upon the other animate and inanimate beings and “license to reshape the world to suit his own tastes and to seize for his exclusive use the resources provided for all” (Worster, 1977: 85). Romantics, being the successors of the arcadian view of nature to Worster (1977), preferred “biocentrism” rather than anthropocentrism since all living beings have a claim upon “man’s moral affections” (85). In addition to this, as Andrew Dobson (2007) discusses in his book *Green Political Thought*, the preservation of natural sources or raw materials should not be only for human needs. Instead, it should be for the sustainability of the biocentric view of nature (15). In a straightforward way, he (2007) states the fact that “[i]t is not just that the non-human world constitutes a set of resources for human use and that if we run them down we threaten the very basis of human life itself: it is that even if resources were infinite, there might still be good reason not to treat the non-human world in a purely instrumental fashion” (28-9). It is prevalent to see that anthropocentrism is strictly rejected by Green politics following the argument that “[i]t is hubris to declare that humans are the central figures of life on Earth and that we are in control. In the long run, Nature is in control” (Spretnak and Capra, 1986: 234). The idea that is proposed both by Charlene Spretnak in Appendix C titled “The Spiritual Dimension of Green Politics,” of the book *Green Politics* and Dobson in his book is that human beings do not have a right to own the Earth and everything living on it. Contrary to this right, all animate – including humankind – and inanimate beings are owned by the Earth itself.

Crispin Tickell (2007) mentions in the “Foreword” of the book *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is Fighting Back –and How We Can Still Save Humanity*, a geologist named James Hutton who “saw the Earth as a self-regulating system” (xiv). Human beings’ only goal should be to understand how this system works, not to demolish everything because “[w]hat happens in one place very soon affects what happens in others” (Tickell, 2007: xvi). To be in connection with nature and its system, a biocentric view of nature is necessary. The Hobbits, the race that best understands the biocentric view of nature during the War of the Ring, were hardly aware of such a view within the borders of the Shire. Their almost zero contact with other races both places them in a different level from the outside world and prevents them from interpreting what is happening in the outside world. This situation changes in the eyes of the four hobbits, and the situation they realize is beyond their imagination:

It is not only the steadfast wizard and the fugitive king whom the hobbits learn to trust; they also come increasingly to put their faith in the providentially ordered universe. The hobbits have faith that the cosmos is not accidental and absurd, not random and chaotic. Rather is their world layered and traversed with multiple and hierarchical realities: divine, demonic, geological, zoological, botanical, elvish, human, dwarvish, hobbitic, and so on. Tolkien thus helps us to see that our own cosmos is also a huge interstitial web of interlocking powers. Everything—absolutely everything—deeply intersects and overlaps with everything else. To pluck even a single small strand of this vast cosmic web is to make the whole thing shimmer with endless rippling effects (Wood, 2003: 121-2).

As Wood explains, the entanglement of everything in the cosmos creates the basis for the energy (or force) and biota of that universe. For the force (or it could be the spirit) to travel unhindered in the veins of the universe, each being must contribute to this flow. However, it can be said that few races in Middle-earth have understood this because what is called nature spirit is not a phenomenon that can be seen or felt with the senses. Spirit, which is the indispensable substance of nature, brings the power that spirituality reveals with nature. Moreover, this spirituality is too valuable to count according to Curry's quotation from Alkis Kontos:

In positive terms, as Alkis Kontos points out, when nature was still largely experienced as integral, alive and active, 'It was the spiritual dimension of the world, its enchanted, magical quality that rendered it infinite, not amenable to complete calculability; spirit could not be quantified; it permitted and invited mythologization'" (Curry, 2004: 162-3).

However, this "spiritual dimension of the world" is not an abstract being despite its incalculability. It has a body in a tree, stone, mountain, water, or wind. Likely, in Tolkien's legendarium, this force is embodied in trees, plants, winds, rivers, and precious stones. The arcadian kind of attachment to the nature mentioned above can reach the transcendental dimension, as in Thoreau's example. In such a situation, the individual may want to go beyond his own body and become in contact with nature. However, this situation may lead to the abstraction of man from his own body and the disappearance of material reality to understand nature's organisms. For Tolkien studies, such transcendental discourse should be avoided, as it brings us closer to the fact mentioned above that postmodernism brings about that everything consists of discourse.

Along with discourse, bodily reality cannot be ignored; these two phenomena are already inseparable, and in Tolkien's legendarium, the spiritual discourse is embodied, as mentioned before.

As the last word, I would like to say: in order for environmental consciousness to be realized and our attachment with nature (which has always existed) to improve, we need to destroy our circle that we have created and isolated from everything. We need to know that in the religious structures belonging to ancient civilizations that we now call mythology, this environmental consciousness is revealed by animistic, paganist, shamanistic, etc., rituals. However, industrial, scientific and technological developments have transformed this consciousness into mechanistic consciousness. Without distinguishing between body and spirit, living and non-living beings are the essence that constitutes nature with their entangled and intertwined states.

CHAPTER TWO

ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH

What makes this chapter⁴⁶ an inevitable part of the dissertation is Tolkien's impact on environmental issues more than intended research articles or books could have. Whether it is accepted or not, "he was an unapologetic defender of nature before environmentalism had yet been made into a cause" (Wood, 2003: 27). It is supposed that Tolkien did not intend to reveal such an impact, although a work of Tolkien cannot be imagined without the trees, plants, forests or mountains, hills, and rivers. "But he obviously had a particular affection for flora. I count sixty-four species of non-cultivated plants specifically mentioned in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* – surely an unusual number for any work of fiction," (89) says Curry (2004). In effect, this could make Tolkien close to nature writing in which the descriptions of landscape or weather conditions are preliminary than the characters and the events. On the other hand, the characters and events in his legendarium are as important as the landscapes because of the fact that the development of the characters and events are directly linked to the ecological and natural phenomena in the legendarium. As a result, nature turns into "an actor in the drama" rather than "just as the stage upon which the human story is acted out" (Glotfelty, 1996: xxi). Michael N. Stanton (2001) mentions that nature has a moral dimension in Tolkien's universe: "One's closeness to and respect for nature is a measure of one's goodness, as distance from and disrespect for nature is a measure of evil" (17), adding an example from Gandalf's relationship with his horse: "The love between horse and wizard is a concrete example of moral worth as measured by closeness to, or distance from, the world of nature" (37).

The races of the legendarium scatter in different geographical distinctiveness, especially in Middle-earth. Furthermore, this causes the races to differ in their identities and attitudes towards nature. This difference, defined as "heterogeneity of local distinctiveness," brings along many riches such as "historical, cultural and ecological." The way to have a "longitudinal wisdom" or "wisdom about nature" in this living and organic cosmos is through loving plains, mountains, rivers, and cities, each of which is unique, of Middle-earth (Curry, 2004: 275). For this purpose, in this chapter of the

⁴⁶ The events covered in this chapter will generally be those of the Third Age of Middle-earth, which are also narrated in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Besides, references to earlier ages are inevitable because each age is full of events that trigger one another.

dissertation, the balance of ecological systems in Tolkien's cosmology, the relationship between living and non-living beings, the attitudes of certain races towards nature, and the destruction of nature by evil will be discussed.

2.1. Hobbits/The Shire

The reason to begin with the Hobbits is that his two works (*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) begin with them. Tolkien describes them so that the reader may suspect that he loves them most among the other races in his legendarium. In other words, the reader can sense the joy Tolkien feels when he narrates the parts concerning them. Both Bilbo and Frodo are the most important hobbits among this race since they experience a dangerous adventure in the Third Age of Middle-earth. An "accident" (which will be revealed later) in Bilbo's adventure changes the course of the events in the mentioned age. Despite their short stature, Hobbits are one of the most cheerful and simple creatures in Middle-earth. They love their homeland and nature itself;⁴⁷ in a way they have "a close friendship with the earth" (Tolkien, 2004: 1). This arcadian way of life makes them the only race closest to the earth after the Elves.

The Shire, their lovely homeland, is a green countryside with a river running from north to the south dividing a border within the Shire. The folks dwelling on the western side of the river do not cross it unless necessary. They earn their food from the very soil in their lands by agriculture.⁴⁸ As mentioned in "Prologue," they love "good tilled earth: a well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favourite haunt. They do not and did not understand or like machines more complicated than a forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom, though they were skilful with tools" (Tolkien, 2004: 1). They love their gardens, and their houses are not the usual ones with many floors. Instead of building flats, they dig the holes inside the hills, making them closer to the

⁴⁷ Accordingly, they always give flower names especially to girls. Frodo's mother's name is also a flower name: Belladonna Took. The name Belladonna originated from the etymological point of view by Carl Linnaeus as it was named after women used this plant to give colour to their eyelids during the Renaissance.

⁴⁸ Their dealing with the land and spending their lives in agriculture prevents them from entering any "governmental" system in the sociological structure because each family deals with its own land and feeds on its own products: "The Shire at this time had hardly any 'government'. Families for the most part managed their own affairs. Growing food and eating it occupied most of their time. In other matters they were, as a rule, generous and not greedy, but contented and moderate, so that estates, farms, workshops, and small trades tended to remain unchanged for generations" (Tolkien, 2004: 9). The only traces of a republican establishment are the "Mayor of Michel Delving (or of the Shire)" (Tolkien, 2004: 10) that they choose every seven years. The only civil servant they have is "The Shirriffs," the title that "the Hobbits gave to their police, or the nearest equivalent that they possessed" (Tolkien, 2004: 10).

earth and meaning comfort.⁴⁹ According to Wood (2003), hobbit architecture is like a mirror of their natural life. Physically small, Hobbits were created as a result of Tolkien's challenge to our obsession with greatness by breaking the perception of how big the better. For the Hobbits, bigger does not mean better, and small can be nice and practical too.⁵⁰ The holes they live in are built that way so that they can better embrace the world. Their large and bare feet⁵¹ allow them to move quickly and quietly and "make them swift in movement and adept at tramping the land that they truly *inhabit*." They can travel quickly on foot, which makes them appreciate the features of the earth (24; emphasis in original). As can be seen, the physical qualities of the Hobbits provide them an easier way to accept nature.

They love food⁵² and drink, songs and dance and their good manners improve a good relationship among themselves. Tolkien so beautifully describes their homeland that it seems impossible for now to find well-preserved and well-cared lands like the Shire. Wood (2003) likewise mentions that life in the Shire constitutes the vision of life for Tolkien. Instead of carrying the burden of the world, the Hobbits are responsible for preserving "a last unspoiled corner of Middle-earth as a haven of modest and exemplary life" (90). Accordingly, the Hobbits' homeland is one of the rare places in Middle-earth where evil does not live (at least now). This situation can also be interpreted as a sacred duty given to them: To live a humble life by knowing the value of nature and the earth.⁵³ Where they best prove this is sustainable agriculture. They produce food to the extent of being sufficient for their meals without waste and spoiling their soils because of tillage. Wood (2003) also attributes this thrifty behavior of the Hobbits to their love of good creation. They are not convinced that happiness is "in things that can be purchased and devoured; they are not getters and spenders who lay waste to their

⁴⁹ "[H]obbit-building had long since been altered, improved by devices, learned from Dwarves, or discovered by themselves. A preference for round windows, and even round doors, was the chief remaining peculiarity of hobbit-architecture" (Tolkien, 2004: 7). But it is important to remember that such hobbit-holes belong to Hobbiton Hobbits, and the Shire is not just Hobbiton. In the Stock and Marish districts west of the Brandywine River on the Eastfarthing of the Shire, Hobbits' homes were built with roofs and stone walls.

⁵⁰ With these features, they realize a kind of practice of Schumacher's "Small is Beautiful" theory mentioned in the First Chapter.

⁵¹ Although their feet are bare, they attach great importance to clothing. They usually prefer bright coloured clothes. Their favourite colours are green and yellow, which are most specific colours of nature.

⁵² Especially dinner (if possible they do it twice a day) makes them very enjoyable.

⁵³ As John Ruskin (2011) puts it with wisdom: "There is no Wealth but Life. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others" (168).

powers” (25). Namely, Hobbits do not intend to consume or waste a thing owing to their view of the world. An evil that has happened to such a country where nature is so protected and cared about is very likely to be met more sadly than the evil that has happened to other countries in Middle-earth. Until then, the emphasis that the Shire and the Shire-folk are out of sight has delayed the arrival of this evil to the Shire to some extent, but they, who do not get involved in the external affairs, also suffer from this evil.

The simple and isolated lives of the Hobbits, after a while, severed them from the life outside.⁵⁴ For the Hobbits who think that the Shire, where they live, is nothing but the world, the outside world is full of obscurity and danger. That is why Frodo says to Gildor, one of the Noldor elves they (Frodo, Sam, and Pippin) encounter in Woodyend while trying to leave Bag End and reach Buckland: “I knew that danger lay ahead, of course; but I did not expect to meet it in our own Shire” (Tolkien, 2004: 83). Gildor’s answer then reflects precisely the way the Hobbits perceive the world: “[Y]ou can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out” (Tolkien, 2004: 83). Contrary to what is expected, Saruman, not Sauron, is responsible for the evil in the Shire. After his defeat in Isengard, Saruman goes to the Shire with his stooge, Wormtongue, and enslaves the Shire-folk, who live in peace and tranquillity until then, to himself. With Saruman, one of the pioneers of capitalism and industry in Middle-earth, the land of the Shire transforms into a capital city (“more rules, more petty bureaucrats” (Stanton, 2001: 91)), contrary to what was initially described by Tolkien (1976), “when there was less noise and more green” (17).

The Shire-folk, who love to eat as much as they produce, pursue equality and sincerity in their relations and share and help each other, turn into individuals who overproduce and stock for trade but cannot consume what they produce, and most importantly, cause nature destruction (because many trees are cut down to make mills). This devastating transformation of the Shire will be one of the most difficult to overcome for the four hobbits⁵⁵ who are, meanwhile, on a challenging quest in the great fight against Sauron. Nevertheless, Samwise Gamgee will be the hobbit who is most affected and who struggles the most. The things he sees and experiences as Frodo’s

⁵⁴ “[T]hey heeded less and less the world outside where dark things moved, until they came to think that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk. They forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it” (Tolkien, 2004: 5).

⁵⁵ Frodo Baggins, Samwise Gamgee, Meriadoc ‘Merry’ Brandybuck and Peregrin ‘Pippin’ Took

company in this quest show him that he would very much like to return to his old purity while maturing him in the face of the outer world. After the Ring of Power is destroyed and Sauron is defeated, the hobbits who return to the Shire are so confident that they will find the Shire as they left it, that no matter how mature they are, they do not predict that even if the evil disappears, its traces would still exist; after all, “[n]or are battles and deeds, however glorious, sufficient for the task” (Stanton, 2001: 91-2). But the degradation they see in the Shire is no different from the evil they have encountered on their quest. According to the accounts of Farmer Cotton, “[t]hey’re always a-hammering and a-letting out a smoke and a stench, and there isn’t no peace even at night in Hobbiton. And they pour out filth a purpose; they’ve fouled all the lower Water and it’s getting down into Brandywine. If they want to make the Shire into a desert, they’re going the right way about it” (Tolkien, 2004: 1013). Essentially, the hobbits saw this destruction in Isengard and Mordor before. As Stanton (2001) mentions, “[e]vil is at any rate in people, in hearts and wills, not just in rings” (92). As mentioned earlier, Sam, who is the most resentful of this situation, immediately starts to set things right and restore the Shire’s former state, especially nature. This is, of course, the result of Sam’s inherent life, that is, his life as a gardener. Gardening, which all he knows and can do best, has prevented his soul from degenerating during this quest and eventually causes him to return to his home “as the future mayor of Hobbiton” (Wood, 2003: 85). Sam fulfils this task properly, and the Shire attains vegetative fertility of an unprecedented scale:

Altogether, 1420 in the Shire was a marvellous year. Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect measure, but there seemed something more: an air of richness and growth, and a gleam of a beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. All the children born or begotten in that year, and there were many, were fair to see and strong, and most of them had a rich golden hair that had before been rare among hobbits. The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream; and later they sat on the lawns under the plum-trees and ate, until they had made piles of stones like small pyramids or the heaped skulls of a conqueror, and then they moved on. And no one was ill, and everyone was pleased, except those who had to mow the grass (Tolkien, 2004: 1023).

The quotation suggests that it is an excellent year for the Shire. Moreover, the most important reason for this fertility is the soil Galadriel gave Sam as a gift from her garden and the acorn of mallorn, the famous golden trees of Lórien. Thanks to the soil Galadriel gave, the vegetation of the Shire becomes so exuberant and abundant. Likewise, Sam, who planted the acorn in place of the old Party Tree that was cut down, makes the Shire famous for it. One of the most beautiful mallorn trees in Middle-earth is now in the Shire.

The clever use of this gift by Sam makes him a highly eco-conscious and community-serving individual rather than an ego-centred individual who thinks only of himself and his garden: “‘But I’m sure the Lady would not like me to keep it all for my own garden, now so many folk have suffered,’ said Sam” (Tolkien, 2004: 1023). Frodo’s remark, which advises Sam to use the gift consciously and wisely, is also noteworthy: “[U]se the gift to help your work and better it. And use it sparingly. There is not much here, and I expect every grain has a value” (Tolkien, 2004: 1023). The lands of Frodo, Sam, and other Hobbits, which have been re-greened by this gift, are a projection of the Elves’ fondness for the land because this gift of Galadriel is also important for the preservation of the Hobbits’ way of life. Another critical point is expressed by Allison Kerley (2015) as follows: “Galadriel’s gift, the gift of earth from the land of Lórien, where elves and the land share a symbiotic bond, was a gift which not only healed the land, but helped to heal the hearts of those who lived there” (39). With the healing of the land, the regeneration of the Hobbits’ lifestyles is very similar to the “symbiotic bond” between the Elves and earth mentioned above. To better understand this bond, it is necessary to approach the Elves in more detail. This is precisely my purpose in the second subheading.

2.2. The Elves/Their Eco-Friendly Dwellings in the Third Age

The Elves, which can be described as the race that has gained the environmental awareness in Tolkien’s legendarium, are the permanent guests of Arda. Living as communities in both Aman (i.e., with the Valar) and in different geographies of Middle-earth, the Elves are admired especially by the Men and Hobbits with their eye-catching external appearances, their bodies that always look young and healthy, their strong structures, and their images adorned with the intense light of the West.⁵⁶ Although they,

⁵⁶ The Elves love the stars and Varda the most, as the first thing they see when they wake up in Cuiviénen is Varda’s stars. For this reason, many wise Elves are identified with stars. For example, Elrond’s

the First Children of Ilúvatar, sometimes succumbed to the responsibilities of the state of immortality, they always fight on the front lines in the wars against the enemy and especially change the history of Middle-earth in many ways.⁵⁷

Many Elven communities, who migrated to Aman and returned to Middle-earth where they had awakened, or who never went to Aman but always remained in Middle-earth, settle in various parts of Middle-earth, and contribute to the flora of it. Rivendell,⁵⁸ the land of the famous Elven lord Elrond, Lothlórien, the land of Galadriel, a powerful Elven Lady, and Thranduil's palace in Mirkwood, one of the Sindar elves who gave up the journey to Aman, are important settlements of the Elven communities located in the Third Age of Middle-earth. The common point of these Elven settlements is that they are protected by Elven magic. These areas, where the enemy never dared to attack,⁵⁹ also become resting points for visitors.

The Elven cities that embrace exhausted visitors with the warmth of a home after a challenging adventure can be referred to as safe zones of Middle-earth with their peaceful, fertile, and extraordinary natural formations or landscapes. Rivendell, a frequent destination for Bilbo and the dwarves⁶⁰ on their journey, gives both Bilbo and the dwarves opportunity to both relax and refresh: "All of them, the ponies as well, grew refreshed and strong in a few days there" (Tolkien, 1976: 61). Even the dwarves who cannot get along with the Elves want to stay at Rivendell a little longer⁶¹ because the place they stay is unforgettably good for them after their challenging adventures: "Their clothes were mended as well as their bruises, their tempers and their hopes" (Tolkien, 1976: 61).⁶²

description fits this well: "The face of Elrond was ageless, neither old nor young, though in it was written the memory of many things both glad and sorrowful. His hair was dark as the shadows of twilight, and upon it was set a circlet of silver; his eyes were grey as a clear evening, and in them was *a light like the light of stars*" (Tolkien, 2004: 227). Elrond's daughter Arwen is also identified by the stars: "Young she was and yet not so. The braids of her dark hair were touched by no frost, her white arms and clear face were flawless and smooth, and *the light of stars was in her bright eyes*" (Tolkien, 2004: 227).

⁵⁷ The ecological consciousness of the Elves is by their creation.

⁵⁸ The Last Homely House before wilderness begins.

⁵⁹ "And here in Rivendell there live still some of his [Sauron] chief foes: the Elven-wise, lords of the Eldar from beyond the furthest seas. They do not fear the Ringwraiths, for those who have dwelt in the Blessed Realm live at once in both worlds, and against both the Seen and the Unseen they have great power" (Tolkien, 2004: 222-3).

⁶⁰ In total they are thirteen: Dwalin, Balin, Kili, Fili, Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, and Thorin Oakenshield.

⁶¹ They stay there for at least fourteen days.

⁶² Rivendell's healing power actually comes from Elrond because Elrond is also best at healing the wounds of the Middle-earth people, as he is one of the greatest of the Elves inhabiting Middle-earth. For example, Frodo's fatal injury at Weathertop heals thanks to Elrond's wisdom.

During their stay in Rivendell,⁶³ Bilbo and his dwarf friends, whose hopes are renewed as well as their wounds, witness more closely the way of life of the Elves and especially Elrond's wisdom because thanks to Elrond, they solve the meaning of the runes (moon-letters⁶⁴) written on the map in Thorin's hand and the swords the company found in the trolls' lair:

Elrond knew all about runes of every kind. That day he looked at the swords they had brought from the trolls' lair, and he said: "These are not troll-make. They are old swords, very old swords of the High Elves of the West, my kin. They were made in Gondolin⁶⁵ for the Goblin-wars. They must have come from a dragon's hoard or goblin plunder, for dragons and goblins destroyed that city many ages ago. This, Thorin, the runes name Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver in the ancient tongue of Gondolin; it was a famous blade. This, Gandalf, was Glamdring, Foehammer that the king of Gondolin [Turgon] once wore. Keep them well!" (Tolkien, 1976: 61).

For the company, including Gandalf, Elrond's ability to read the runes opens new horizons in this adventure. Their adventure becomes even more meaningful when they understand that these swords they find in the trolls' cave are important weapons. This sane posture of Elrond⁶⁶ changes the course of the events many times in Middle-earth history, but even for Elrond, time is running out in the Third Age of Middle-earth. Many Elven leaders, including Elrond and Galadriel, consider leaving Middle-earth and sailing to the Undying Lands. It will not be easy for them to leave it, which they have seen as their home for ages, because they have gone to great lengths to preserve the beauty and keep Valinor's glamorous and fascinating environment in it.

Galadriel's Lothlórien becomes the resting place of the Fellowship of the Ring after the adventure of Moria, and the landscape and supernatural trees of this forest

⁶³ Likewise, Frodo and his friends take refuge in Rivendell after the Weathertop attack and get rid of their past fears: "To Frodo his dangerous flight, and the rumours of the darkness growing in the world outside, already seemed only the memories of a troubled dream" (Tolkien, 2004: 239).

⁶⁴ It is a method of secret message invented by the Dwarves. It can only be read in the same moon shape and the same season when the letters are written. But in the Third Age, there are no Dwarves who can read these letters.

⁶⁵ "In *The Silmarillion*, a great city whose name in Sindarin means 'The hidden rock'. It was built in a secret and protected realm by the elf-king Turgon, surrounded by the Encircling Mountains. For centuries it lay hidden from Morgoth who eventually sacked it with the help of balrogs, orcs and dragons" (Duriez, 2001: 86).

⁶⁶ In addition, Elrond has the power to do some natural phenomena. For example, after Frodo crosses the Bruinen River on Glorfindel's horse, when the Ringwraiths enter after him, the river waters rise into a flood and sweeps the Ringwraiths away. Since the Bruinen River is a river that protects Rivendell, acting as a kind of border, Elrond can dominate this river.

affect the company very much. Just as the Hobbits' homes are underground holes, the Elves' are branches of trees. Lórien elves, who make the tops of giant trees home to them, also love to drink, eat, feast and sing. Stanton (2001) says that the feast and song, which have a culturally significant place, are part of the daily existence of the Elves. However, they think that when they leave Middle-earth, that too will disappear. After all, it was their choice to live in Middle-earth, and they have developed a relatively resilient way of life, but they are also aware that their duty in Middle-earth is now over (34).

However, during their time in Middle-earth, the Elves' contact with nature has always been one step ahead of other races. It is not surprising that the mentality that makes the trees home has gained environmental awareness, and their harmony with nature and their respect for it make them the protective race of Middle-earth. The wisdom of the Elves, as exemplified above, plays a vital role in the attainment of this consciousness. This wisdom and tranquillity came from their being the First Children of Ilúvatar and winning the support of the Valar. However, as Stanton (2001) points out, the Elves do not exhibit ostentatious piety. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, they occupy a respectable place among the peoples of Middle-earth: “[T]hey are looked up to by their fellow-dwellers in Middle-earth, and they in turn revere the powers beyond the Sea who have been their patrons and protectors” (35).

One of the biggest reasons for this respect is that the Elves were assigned by some Valar, especially Ulmo, to heal the wounds of Melkor's pillage of Middle-earth: “[T]he Quendi should be left free to walk as they would in Middle-earth, and with their gifts of skill to order all the lands and heal their hurts” (Tolkien, 1999: 49). The reason why the Elves love Middle-earth so much - that is, an ecological mission - also has a cosmogonic infrastructure. In the context of this mission, Dickerson and Evans (2006) see the Elves as stewards of Middle-earth. When it is associated with the notion of “caring management,” which is one of the meanings of the word stewardship, “[t]his implies a perspective in which the Elves are seen as servants; however, the idea of “ordering” the land also suggests the exercise of authority over it or the imposition of some structure that might not otherwise naturally exist” (42). As Dickerson and Evans (2006) mention, the role of the servant and lord associated with this notion evokes the Elves most of all among the peoples of Middle-earth. In this case, the Elves are “horticulturalists” of Middle-earth, not agriculturalists like the Hobbits: “Even when it is undertaken rightly and lovingly, horticulture implies some rule over the land and its

products—some aspect of a ruler choosing what the land will produce and how it will be arranged” (42).

A community’s bond with the soil also affects the food that the community eats. In this direction, it is sufficient to look primarily at the Elven feasts abundant in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The feast that Bilbo and the dwarves dream of for the first time in Mirkwood is realized in *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo, Sam and Pippin meet the Elf leader Gildor and other Elves in Woodyend: “[T]here was bread, surpassing the savour of a fair white loaf to one who is starving; and fruits sweet as wildberries and richer than the tended fruits of gardens” (Tolkien, 2004: 82). Since there is bread, they should be growing wheat, but nowhere in Middle-earth history is there any information that the Elves cultivate fields. In this case, they probably buy the wheat to make bread from other people that work in the field. Likewise, the same is true for the Wood-elves living in Mirkwood. As described in *The Hobbit*, “the Wood-elves, and especially their king, were very fond of wine, though no vines grew in those parts. The wine, and other goods, were brought from far away, from their kinsfolk in the South, or from the vineyards of Men in distant lands” (Tolkien, 1976: 172). In this context, it is clear that the Elves (of the Third Age) do not cultivate fields but export their food supplies from elsewhere. However, they are very advanced in horticulture, and the best example of this is Lothlórien, where Lady Galadriel lives:

There are no trees like the trees of that land. For in the autumn their leaves fall not, but turn to gold. Not till the spring comes and the new green opens do they fall, and then the boughs are laden with yellow flowers; and the floor of the wood is golden, and golden is the roof, and its pillars are of silver, for the bark of the trees is smooth and grey” (Tolkien, 2004: 335).

This gardening ability is so far ahead in Lothlórien that the leaves of the trees never fall off when autumn comes; instead, they turn to gold.⁶⁷ Apart from the trees, many flowers - such as *elanor* and *niphredil*⁶⁸ - add variety to the floral beauty of Lothlórien. Also striking in the quotation are the colours of gold and silver that follow the seasonal cycle

⁶⁷ The same is true for Rivendell. Despite being in October, Frodo and his friends who take refuge in Rivendell still see the traces of summer there: “The air was warm. The sound of running and falling water was loud, and the evening was filled with a faint scent of trees and flowers, as if summer still lingered in Elrond’s gardens” (Tolkien, 2004: 226).

⁶⁸ “Here ever bloom the winter flowers in the unfading grass: the yellow *elanor*, and the pale *niphredil*” (Tolkien, 2004: 350).

of the trees. The same set of lights⁶⁹ is striking at the Elven feast in Woodyend. As Dickerson and Evans (2006) say, in Woodyend an Elf's saying, "[t]here is a fire in the hall" means "a natural hall whose roof is made of tree boughs" (96). "The floor is the grass; the chairs are old tree trunks," continue Dickerson and Evans (2006: 96).⁷⁰

However, woods or forests are not the only dwellings of the Elves throughout Middle-earth history. Especially in the First Age, they also lived underground, in caves or rocks to protect themselves from Melkor/Morgoth's evil. For example, Nargothrond, which was carved under the Taur-en-Faroth hills beneath the Narog River in West Beleriand, was the fortress of Finrod Felagund⁷¹ in the First Age. Melkor/Morgoth overlooked the stronghold of Nargothrond for a long time because it was buried under the rock. Similarly, Gondolin, mentioned above, was founded by Turgon in the Encircling Mountains in Northern Beleriand. Finally, Doriath was established as the Hidden Kingdom of Thingol⁷² in the central part of Beleriand. The most important feature of this land is that it was protected by a magic fence⁷³ created by Melian.⁷⁴ The most magnificent part of the Doriath dwelling is "The Thousand Caves," which was carved with the help of Belegost dwarves in Menegroth, the main stronghold of the region:

[T]he Naugrim laboured long and gladly for Thingol, and devised for him mansions after the fashion of their people, delved deep in the earth. Where the Esgalduin flowed down, and parted Neldoreth from Region, there rose in the midst of the forest a rocky hill, and the river ran at its feet. There they made the gates of the hall of Thingol, and they built a bridge of stone over the river, by which alone the gates could be entered. Beyond the gates wide passages ran down to high halls and chambers far below that were hewn in the *living stone*, so many and so great that that dwelling was named Menegroth, the Thousand Caves (Tolkien, 1999: 101).

⁶⁹ Gold and silver lights are a reference to the lights of the Two Trees in Valinor, which will be discussed later.

⁷⁰ Frodo, Sam, and Pippin spend that night with the Elves, and when they wake up, they realize the Elves are gone. After Frodo wakes up, how he spends his night's sleep in the natural bed prepared by the Elves is described as follows: "He was lying in a bower made by a living tree with branches laced and drooping to the ground; his bed was of fern and grass, deep and soft and strangely fragrant" (Tolkien, 2004: 86). As the quotation shows, Frodo spends the night in a natural bed made of tree branches. This is a good example of the Elves' attachment to nature.

⁷¹ He is Finarfin's eldest son and elder brother to Galadriel. Finarfin is the youngest of Finwë's three sons. When his half-brother Fëanor persuaded the Noldor elves to return to Middle-earth, Finarfin chose to stay in Valinor, but his five children travelled to Middle-earth with Fëanor.

⁷² Greatest of the lords of the Sindar.

⁷³ Girdle of Melian.

⁷⁴ Maiar of Vána and of Estë.

However, even these caves were of such natural beauty that their pillars were modelled after Oromë's beech trees. Nightingales used to sing songs on these trees carved into the cave walls, alongside many animal and bird figures (Tolkien, 1999: 101-2). Finally, the fact that these rocks are called "living stones" proves that the Elves believe the energy of the cosmos exists in that area, even though they took refuge in the underground.

Furthermore, the underground caves of the Elves are not unique to the First Age because in the Third Age, the Wood-elves in Mirkwood also inhabit underground caves. Like the underground cities of the Elder Ages, the caves of the Wood-elves were created to preserve the beauty of creation: "This great cave, from which countless smaller ones opened out on every side, wound far underground and had many passages and wide halls; but it was lighter and more wholesome than any goblin-dwelling, and neither so deep nor so dangerous" (Tolkien, 1976: 165). These caves and passages, called Thranduil's palace, explain the Elves' devotion to earthly beauty as well as their fondness for architectural structures that reflect divine beauty. The "living stone," which is called the material of underground cities in the First Age, is also valid for Thranduil's palace: "In a great hall with pillars hewn out of the living stone sat the Elvenking on a chair of carven wood" (Tolkien, 1976: 168). Apart from that, just like the magic preservation of Gondolin, his palace is also protected by magic, as Thranduil points out: "There is no escape from my magic doors for those who are once brought inside" (Tolkien, 1976: 168). But Thranduil is mistaken because Bilbo can enter Thranduil's palace unseen and escape from there with the dwarves, thanks to a magic ring he found in the depths of the Misty Mountains.

Intrusion into the Elven lands surrounded by magic is not only experienced in the Third Age. All the Elven lands mentioned above, belonging to the First Age, witnessed these intrusions somehow (whether protected by magic or not) and were destroyed. While using the Elven magic, the leaders of these lands took advantage of the possibilities offered by nature and the supernatural powers that the gods (i.e., Ilúvatar or Valar) bestowed on them. This also reveals that these leaders, even if they belong to the Elven race, used the possibilities that nature offered them to maintain their rule. One of the common characteristics of all these leaders is their ambition to have "power" (whatever that power is). As an indicator of this power, precious stones always come to the fore. The fall of Doriath, the looting of Nargothrond by the dragon Glaurung, and the collapse of Gondolin are also due to the Silmaril stones created by Fëanor in the

interconnected chain of events. This situation reminds us of the “view of science” of the Swiss alchemist Paracelsus:

Paracelsus’s view of science was firmly rooted in the tradition of spiritual magic. For Paracelsus the operative side of science involved bringing into action forces derived from the heavens. Mankind was in a unique position to exploit these forces by being situated at the “boundary” or at the “centre” between the heavens and the rest of creation; man was the “medium”, and operative science could be regarded as a form of magic. Only mankind was granted the capacity to unleash the virtues hidden in stones, plants, words and characters [...] The model for this impressive command over nature was the *magus* of the scriptures, especially as exemplified by Moses, Solomon or the three Kings of the East, an image which the renaissance magicians were accustomed to conflate with its kinsman, the *magus* figure of hermeticism (Webster, 1982: 57; emphasis in original).

As mentioned in the First Chapter, the idea that human beings see themselves at the centre of the universe and above everything is assumed to give them the right to exploit everything outside themselves. In the events of *The Silmarillion*, the fact that these Elven leaders made themselves superior to other Elves and tried to take command of their environment, thanks to these precious stones they had or desired to have, is also a representation of this idea. This situation that Tolkien exemplifies about the Elven race also reveals that although the Elves are the closest community with “environmental consciousness,” the feeling of dominating other beings is universal and consists of an individual approach.

However, the Elves who have the same power and use the possibilities of nature to beautify it rather than exploit through magic are in the majority because Elven magic can be an extraordinary bond that shows their contact with nature. Nevertheless, this trait is not only Elven in Tolkien’s legendarium. The same can be said for the magic used by the wizards in Middle-earth. Gandalf, who leads the Fellowship of the Ring with the magic he obtains, using the energy of nature, is one of the most important representatives of this bond: “Thus what seems to be magic may be only (only!) a powerful sympathy with nature” (Stanton, 2001: 47). The same energy act is present in the Elves of Lórien. The Elven leader’s response to the question “Are these magic

cloaks?” (Tolkien, 2004: 370) asked by Pippin about gifts given to the company on leaving Lothlórien confirms this act:

‘I do not know what you mean by that,’ answered the leader of the Elves. ‘They are fair garments, and the web is good, for it was made in this land. They are elvish robes certainly, if that is what you mean. Leaf and branch, water and stone: they have the hue and beauty of all these things under the twilight of Lórien that we love; for we put the thought of all that we love into all that we make (Tolkien, 2004: 370).

As can be seen from the answer given by the Elven leader, the magic of the cloaks lies in the inspiration the Elves receive from nature as they make them. The Elves, reflecting the natural beauty of the places they live in what they do, have “a deep affinity with and understanding of the natural world” (Stanton, 2001: 47).

The Elves living in Lórien do not think that they are different or special from the natural world. That is why they do not see the rest of the natural world as a platform for exploitation. On the contrary, they take care to act as part of the natural world, keep up with the existing order, and respect it. However, this existing order is not a perfect one in which everything is in a particular organization. Just because the Elves appeared in creation as the First Children of Ilúvatar does not mean that they rank high in this order. Throughout the ages, the human being has been regarded as the perfect being of all beings. The reason for this is that the human being never wanted to admit that he had a connection with other beings. Moreover, they tried to explain this order with a chain:

From the simplest forms of life, the bacteria, to the most complex, *Homo sapiens*, nature was arranged in regularly graded intervals, which reflected the orderliness of creation. The chain was meant as a description of the world of nature as it has been since creation and as it always would be. If the chain of being had fully reflected Aristotelian perfection, and later scholars’ expectations of order in nature, then it would have been unbroken; there would have been no gaps in the gradation of the natural world. However, there were large apparent gaps; namely, between minerals and plants, between plants and animals, and, most embarrassing of all, between apes and humans (Leakey and Lewin, 1995: 79).

Likewise, in Tolkien's legendarium, this order is not so easy and simple. As in the real world, it is not possible to talk about a chain of being due to the complicated life forms and races. Often times, it can be seen that Tolkien's Elves, who are described as the "master race," are unable to bear the responsibility of this role, or that a being thought to be at the bottom of the chain exhibits higher skills. Furthermore, most importantly, the opening of the Fourth Age (the Age of Men)⁷⁵ is a sign that this "so-called" superiority and chain has been broken as the last Elves leave Middle-earth.

2.3. Man is Man Everywhere

Men, the Second Children of Ilúvatar, come to Middle-earth after the Elves. Compared to the Elves, it seems that their strength and abilities are limited, and their devotion to Middle-earth is not knitted by a sacred mission like that of the Elves. According to what is mentioned in *The Silmarillion*, Ilúvatar expects men to adapt to the order of the cosmos and to act in this direction, but they, "being set amid the turmoils of the powers of the world, would stray often, and would not use their gifts in harmony" (Tolkien, 1999: 36). But the continuation of this narrative is intriguing because Ilúvatar believes that men too will one day adapt and glorify his musical theme: "These too in their time shall find that all that they do redounds at the end only to the glory of my work" (Tolkien, 1999: 36). Ilúvatar, who predicts that they will not be as capable as the Elves in this process of harmony, creates Men as mortal beings and makes their fate different from that of the Elves.

Moreover, as always emphasized in *The Silmarillion*, this mythology is not a creation based on Men. As seen in *The Silmarillion* and twelve volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*, events are often told through the Elves' eyes, or their reactions to events are emphasized. In this context, Tolkien's mythology cannot be called anthropocentric. Instead, there is an ecocentric narrative, taking into account the missions of the Elves on Arda. Many of the problems encountered in anthropocentric fiction are prevented in this way. Since, many of these problems stem from men's arrogance, greed, and insatiability. It cannot be said that the Men in Tolkien's legendarium are far from this definition. While their eyes turn with the passion for war, the desire for power and the will to possess prevent them from protectively approaching the natural environment, thus causing great destruction. There are exceptions in this

⁷⁵ The Fourth Age of Middle-earth can be called as Anthropocene. As Anthropocene concept is based on uncertainty and unpredictability, the Fourth Age of Middle-earth is also full of uncertainties.

case, too. For example, Faramir, who is one of the sons of Gondor's steward, Denethor, is one of these exceptions. After the fall of Sauron, Faramir, who takes charge of Ithilien, the former district of Gondor, works hard to restore that area to its former glory (its former flora) with his wife Eowyn.⁷⁶

Another exception is Aragorn, the heir of Isildur and king of Arnor and Gondor of the Fourth Age. The kingdom that Aragorn won by divine right makes the Fourth Age of Middle-earth, the age of Men. This divine right will be explained in more detail in the Third Chapter of this dissertation, but what is meant to be emphasized here is that Ilúvatar's prediction about Men, quoted above, seems to have come true with these two characters. Both Faramir and Aragorn⁷⁷ serve the cosmos that Ilúvatar designed. The actions of both to improve the beauty of Middle-earth and especially the efforts to restore natural environmental destruction are a necessity of this design. After all, "in Tolkien's ecology, part of the purpose of creation is simply 'its own beauty.'" (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 50). However, Dickerson and Evans (2006) mention another part of this purpose as follows:

[A]nother part of its purpose—one that exceeds or goes beyond that beauty—is as a dwelling. By no means does this statement place nature ontologically in an inferior or subservient role to Men or Elves; nature is Eru's creation, just as his Children are. But it does mean that, from the beginning, nature's purpose is intimately bound to their coming into the world (50-1).

As can be seen very clearly in the quotation, the "dwelling" of nature does not offer it to the service of Middle-earth races. As stated at the beginning, nature is an active participant rather than a stage in this legendarium. Although nature seems to be created to be a home for Ilúvatar's Children, they are also responsible for protecting and beautifying that house.

The reasons for the events experienced by the Númenóreans, who lived their golden years in the Second Age, are very similar to the view of the human being on the universe and life in the real world. What I mean by this view is the following ideas Paracelsus threw forward:

⁷⁶ Eowyn defines her restoration task as follows: "I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren" (Tolkien, 2004: 965).

⁷⁷ For example, Aragorn can "understand the languages of beasts and birds" (Tolkien, 2004: 149). This is an example of his bond to nature.

Paracelsus believed that from a practical point of view man would only learn to exploit nature to its fullest extent if he were to learn by the mistakes of the past. God had granted all men since the Fall the capacity to overcome their disadvantages and perfect their arts and sciences. By following the light of nature, those capacities, implanted in man like a seed, could be developed to perfection. Nature was so organized that all things were arranged in a “concordance”, shared out on earth according to human needs, and awaiting initiative for the development of all necessary crafts and industries (Webster, 1982: 52).

This perspective is very similar to the lifestyle of the Númenóreans who lived on the island bestowed on them by the Valar. They used the opportunities offered to them to advance their civilization; they were also committed to improving themselves in industry, shipbuilding, and war tools. Instead of protecting and appreciating the natural beauty of the island they lived on, they tried to exploit the Men living in Middle-earth’s western shores and take their places under their own dominion. When progress is made as Paracelsus claims, it is assumed that “[g]radually the quality of life would improve; the seasons and weather would be favourable; the land would be fruitful and the harvests rich; animals and man would prosper; disease and misfortune would vanish” (Webster, 1982: 53). While the same progress is expected to be true for the Númenóreans, these developments had the opposite effect on them:

Númenóreans began to hunger for the undying city that they saw from afar, and the desire of everlasting life, to escape from death and the ending of delight, grew strong upon them; and ever as their power and glory grew greater their unquiet increased. For though the Valar had rewarded the Dúnedain with long life, they could not take from them the weariness of the world that comes at last, and they died, even their kings of the seed of Eärendil; and the span of their lives was brief in the eyes of the Eldar. Thus it was that a shadow fell upon them: in which maybe the will of Morgoth was at work that still moved in the world. And the Númenóreans began to murmur, at first in their hearts, and then in open words, against the doom of Men, and most of all against the Ban which forbade them to sail into the West (Tolkien, 1999: 315)

Their homeland, bestowed upon them by the Valar and beautified by each Vala using his/her own strength,⁷⁸ became insufficient for them. Like the Elves, they wanted to be immortal and set foot on Aman. In order to achieve this, they took care of the dead rather than the living. They resorted to various means to extend their life span.⁷⁹ Furthermore, finally, they built more ships to invade Aman. In this way, they turned their backs to the West, turned away from the Valar, and made them enemies. As a result, they suffered a great defeat.

Just as the Noldor elves in the First Age brought their own ends, mainly because of the Fëanor's oath, in the Second Age, the Númenóreans brought their own ends due to this dangerous progress they made. Bill Joy, in his article titled "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us," written in 2000 on the site named WIRED, mentions how technology in the twenty-first century has dragged men and other living creatures to the danger of extinction and adds: "This is the first moment in the history of our planet when any species, by its own voluntary actions, has become a danger to itself—as well as to vast numbers of others."⁸⁰ This is exactly what the Númenóreans did. As a result, the island bestowed on them by the Valar was flooded by Ilúvatar. They just did not lose their homeland. They were also submerged under the water, along with the ships they had built. This flood does not only require a religious/mythological reading. It has great effects in the ecological sense because the flora and diversity of life on the island somehow ended with this flood disaster. From this perspective, Tolkien gives readers a good opportunity, with the help of Men he created for his legendarium, to question the causes of ecological disasters. In this sense, Tolkien makes us feel how uncomfortable he might be with the nanotechnology and industrialization of the twenty-first century: "Tolkien is sure that modern man's belief that he is the only intelligent species on Earth has not been good for him. Cut off from nature and its multitudes of living beings, mankind has developed a hard artificial industrialism stifling to that side of him which

⁷⁸ "A land was made for the Edain to dwell in, neither part of Middle-earth nor of Valinor, for it was sundered from either by a wide sea; yet it was nearer to Valinor. It was raised by Ossë out of the depths of the Great Water, and it was established by Aulë and enriched by Yavanna; and the Eldar brought thither flowers and fountains out of Tol Eressëa" (Tolkien, 1999: 310-1).

⁷⁹ "[T]hey began to build great houses for their dead, while their wise men laboured unceasingly to discover if they might the secret of recalling life, or at the least of the prolonging of Men's days. Yet they achieved only the art of preserving incorrupt the dead flesh of Men, and they filled all the land with silent tombs in which the thought of death was enshrined in the darkness. But those that lived turned the more eagerly to pleasure and revelry, desiring ever more goods and more riches" (Tolkien, 1999: 318). From this quotation it is understood that Men before the Númenóreans did not bury their dead but burned them. To find a way to be immortal, Númenóreans started to embalm the dead body.

⁸⁰ <https://www.wired.com/2000/04/joy-2/>

is sympathetic, imaginative, free” (Kocher, 1977: 11). This indulgence in industry causes a restriction of imagination and a break with nature. This is why all the evil characters in Middle-earth lack imagination and aim to dominate nature and use it for their own purposes. The Númenóreans are not much different from them in this respect. Because their attitudes that disrupt what was the purpose of creation do not make them different from Melkor/Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman.

2.4. The Lands outside the Hobbiton/Ecological Adventures of Bilbo and Frodo outside the Shire

The reader does not know much about Middle-earth until the hobbits come out of the Shire, especially in *The Lord of the Rings*. Along with the hobbits, the reader discovers forests, wilder lands, diverse ecosystems, and especially places where evil destroys nature. The contact of the fellowship members with nature in different geographies is always at the highest level during the journey from the west to the east, namely from the most natural country of Middle-earth (the Shire) to Mordor, where no signs of nature are encountered. Patricia Meyer Spacks (2004) explains the contact of the good with nature as follows:

The opposed forces also differ in their relation to nature. Goodness is partly equated with understanding of nature, closeness to the natural world. The Rangers, important forces on the side of Good, understand the languages of beasts and birds. Tom Bombadil, who rescues the hobbits from evil in the forest, whose natural power for good is so great that he can see the wearer of the Ring which makes men invisible to all other eyes and he does not become invisible himself when wearing it, is in the most intimate communion with natural forces; he has the power of ‘the earth itself’ (I, 279) (54-5).

As Spacks explains in the quotation above, the contact of the good with nature on this journey makes them stronger against the enemy. On the contrary to the good, on the side of evil, nature ceases to be a phenomenon to be connected to and turns into a tool used for their evil purposes. It is ironic that these characters, who have no contact with nature, desire to be a part of or dominate this world. Spacks (2004), who also examines the relationship of evil with nature, says in this long but essential quotation as such:

The progress toward the heart of evil, toward the Crack of Doom into which, in the trilogy's central fable, the Ring-bearer must throw his Ring of Power, is from natural fertility to the desolation of nature. The Enemy's territory, even its outskirts, is physically and morally a wasteland; the implication is strong that the barrenness of nature here is a direct result of the operations of evil. It is characteristic of the Enemy to depend upon machinery rather than natural forces. Saruman's city has smithies, furnaces, iron wheels revolving endlessly, hammers thudding, steam rising; Treebeard, the great Ent, describes Saruman as having 'a mind of metal and wheels' (II, 76). The Dark Tower, which looms above the Crack of Doom and is the very heart of Sauron's power, is described as 'that vast fortress, armoury, prison, furnace of great power' (II, 161) – the reverse of the natural. As a corollary of their different relations to nature, the representatives of Good tend to be vegetarian, to rely on the simplest of food – bread and honey, mushrooms, compressed grain cakes – whereas the evil powers eat corrupt flesh, drink intoxicating beverages compounded of dreadful, nameless ingredients (55).

As clearly seen in the quotation above, the relationship established with nature in a simple way, that is, instead of being in harmony with it, the relationships with nature that is destroyed thoughtlessly provides the most natural separation of two forces.

Apart from this, Frodo's departure from the Shire and transition to the outside world, as the ring bearer, carries a spiritual initiation task. The closer to the east, Sauron's stronghold, Mount Doom of Mordor, the change in ecological structures and the more pronounced natural destruction make this initiation more meaningful because as a green-minded hobbit, breathing the toxic air makes this journey very difficult for Frodo. The change of biodiversity, the steps taken to wilderness,⁸¹ and the fight against the evil inherent to the cosmos make Frodo mature and better understand this universe.

French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1960), in his book *The Rites of Passage*, describes the rites that have an important place in all cultures as follows: "Consequently, I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal (or threshold) rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *post-liminal rites*" (21; emphasis in original). It can be said that these rites mentioned by Gennep is observed

⁸¹ Here, when we talk about wilderness, what it means is actually places that have been taken over by the evil; and their natural beauty has been lost. Therefore, the wilderness mentioned in both Bilbo's and Frodo's stories consists of this definition. In this sense, Tolkien does not imply that wilderness is a worse place than non-savage or civilization. There are even characters who advocate ideas for the protection of wild nature.

both in Bilbo and Frodo. The most important of these is liminal, which Genep calls the threshold, and these rites are given by ecotones in *The Lord of the Rings*.⁸² Ecotone, defined as the transition from one ecosystem to another, is a subject that deepens the fiction in the subtext of the journeys narrated in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.⁸³

In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo's first ecotone is depicted as follows:

Then they came to lands where people spoke strangely, and sang songs Bilbo had never heard before. Now they had gone on far into the Lone-lands,⁸⁴ where there were no people left, no inns, and the roads grew steadily worse. Not far ahead were dreary hills, rising higher and higher, dark with trees. On some of them were old castles with an evil look, as if they had been built by wicked people. Everything seemed gloomy, for the weather that day had taken a nasty turn (Tolkien, 1976: 43).

As seen in the quotation, there is a change in the ecosystem with Bilbo's first threshold. On the transition from the lush green meadows of Hobbiton to the dreary hills, the weather also worsens following this transition because he and the dwarves "come to the very edge of the Wild" (Tolkien, 1976: 56).

In *The Lord of the Rings*, this transition is rendered visually but deeper. The Hedge, pulled by the Buckleberry hobbits to the Shire border in the east, has a gate to the Old Forest, and this gate is locked. The four hobbits use this door when leaving the Shire, and that scene is depicted as follows: "It was dark and damp. At the far end it was closed by a gate of thick-set iron bars. Merry got down and unlocked the gate, and when they had all passed through he pushed it to again. It shut with a clang, and the lock clicked. The sound was ominous" (Tolkien, 2004: 110). This locked gate is a threshold for Frodo, and at the same time, an ecotone is experienced due to ecosystem change. The hobbits who enter the Old Forest directly after passing through the gate cannot even

⁸² Rites represent the transition from one state to another (such as birth, from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to adulthood, marriage, giving birth, and death). In each of these transitions, various religious rituals are performed in different parts of the world. Bilbo and Frodo's initiation goes hand in hand with the ecotone. Each initiation takes place with an ecotone. From this point of view, these transitions reveal both religious and environmental meanings.

⁸³ An ecotone can be a vegetation change, as well as a change in geographical structures or weather changes. For example, the transition from a dense forest to a barren land or from a mountain range to a flat plain is also an ecotone. Or the sun that warms the air after a blizzard is likewise an ecotone.

⁸⁴ Eriador: "'Eriador was of old the name of all the lands between the Misty Mountains and the Blue; in the South it was bounded by the Greyflood and the Glanduin that flows into it above Tharbad.' In the North lay the great ice-waste of Forochel and the bitter colds of the realm of Morgoth. But after centuries of war, famine and plague had depopulated the region, the various settlements of Men, Elves and Hobbits became increasingly isolated from each other, and eventually only the great ruins of Eriador were left to testify to its former glories" (Tyler, 2014: n.p.).

see the sunlight due to the density of the trees of this forest, and even though the weather is bright, the inside of the forest is very dark. In addition, the rumours that the trees in this forest are alive make the hobbits feel they are being watched by the trees: “For the moment there was no whispering or movement among the branches; but they all got an uncomfortable feeling that they were being watched with disapproval, deepening to dislike and even enmity. The feeling steadily grew, until they found themselves looking up quickly, or glancing back over their shoulders, as if they expected a sudden blow” (Tolkien, 2004: 111). Although they pass into the Old Forest with a Hedge made by the hobbits, this densely wooded forest, following green plains and hills of the Shire, also proves the existence of a natural border, and “natural boundaries such as the edge of a forest, the entrance to a cave, or the shoreline of an ocean—edges defining the borders of wilderness, the subterranean world, or the sea—can have a powerful effect on people” (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 148). This effect is noticeable on hobbits. The wilderness outside of the Shire is not limited to the Old Forest either. The hobbits, and Frodo with Sam, in particular, live many times ecotones, and the effect of these transitions on them becomes more severe and violent each time. Different ecological changes occur in each of these transitions, such as “changes in vegetation and alterations in the terrain, landforms, and such natural features as rivers, mountains, and grasslands” (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 162).

The same happens in *The Hobbit*, in the adventures of Bilbo and the dwarves. The tree species that change as they travel is the most striking. As they come to the eastern border of Eriador and approach the foothills of the Misty Mountains, the tree population decreases and increases (or tree species change), indicating that the company is near or far from danger. For example, the pine trees they encounter on the secret path to Rivendell point to the endurance of this Elven realm because the pine “is a symbol of immortality, due to its evergreen foliage and the incorruptible nature of its resin” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 754). Moreover, as they went down the secret valley, “[t]he trees changed to beech and oak,⁸⁵ and here was a comfortable feeling in the twilight” (Tolkien, 1976: 57). The next step for Bilbo and the dwarves from Rivendell (the resting point as mentioned before) is to cross the Misty Mountains. Climbing to the top of a mountain, like entering a forest, or crossing that mountain and transiting to the other side, also hosts ecosystem change and rite of passage. With the changing weather,

⁸⁵ “It is an especial indicator of strength, power, longevity and height in both the spiritual and the material senses of the words” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 709).

Bilbo and the dwarves realize they are on the edge of wilderness, and this puts them on alert and wary:

Dwarves had not passed that way for many years, but Gandalf had, and he knew how evil and danger had grown and thriven in the Wild, since the dragons had driven men from the lands, and the goblins had spread in secret after the battle of the Mines of Moria. Even the good plans of wise wizards like Gandalf and of good friends like Elrond go astray sometimes when you are off on dangerous adventures over the Edge of the Wild; and Gandalf was a wise enough wizard to know it (Tolkien, 1976: 65).

Because wildlife is also the home of evil, as mentioned in footnote 81, it is difficult even for a wizard like Gandalf to predict from where evil will come. As Gandalf predicts, the company eventually faces danger. However, this danger is greater and loftier than Gandalf expects because they are in the middle of a cosmic battle:

All was well, until one day they met a thunderstorm –more than a thunderstorm, a thunder-battle. You know how terrific a really big thunderstorm can be down in the land and in a river-valley; especially at times when two great thunderstorms meet and clash. More terrible still are thunder and lightning in the mountains at night, when storms come up from *East and West and make war* (Tolkien, 1976: 65).

The first danger in the Misty Mountains is the cosmic war of the East and West, an event beyond Gandalf's power. This cosmic battle of the Valar in the West and the Necromancer⁸⁶ in the East with thunderstorm reaches an even more dangerous dimension when the company notices the stone-giants.⁸⁷ The pantheist embodiment of mountain rocks broken by thunder strikes into stone giants is just one of the cosmic manifestations of Tolkien's legendarium.

The scene of perhaps the most crucial event in the history of Middle-earth takes place after this cosmic war. After the goblin colony living in the Misty Mountains capture Bilbo and the dwarves, the company, trying to escape from the passageways inside the mountain to the other side of it with Gandalf's help, loses Bilbo in the

⁸⁶ Tolkien mentions Sauron in *The Hobbit* as Necromancer.

⁸⁷ Please remember the fact that the peaks of the mountains are the sacred places for they provide a direct contact with the divine beings.

meantime. Meanwhile, Bilbo, who “accidentally” finds the golden ring of Gollum, who lives on an islet in the middle of a pond at the bottom of the mountain, succeeds in crossing the mountain thanks to this ring that will change everyone’s fate in Middle-earth. Before captured by the goblins, they take shelter in the cave due to the storm, but when Bilbo manages to come to light again, the weather is sunny. The improvement of the weather when danger passes implies the effect of cosmic energy on Bilbo: “He could see outside into the open air: there were a few steps running down into a narrow valley between tall mountains; the sun came out from behind a cloud and shone bright on the outside of the door but he could not get through” (Tolkien, 1976: 95). After these goblin tunnels where the concept of time is lost, daylight is a sign that time (or days) is back.

Another meaning of these ecological changes (or ecotones) is the existence of new dangers that may come with this change. After passing through the Misty Mountains, the company, approaching far east, realizes that a new danger awaits them when faced with a new ecotone: “After what seemed ages further they came suddenly to an opening where no trees grew. The moon was up and was shining into the clearing. Somehow it struck all of them as not at all a nice place, although there was nothing wrong to see” (Tolkien, 1976: 103). As it is clear, the company senses danger, although nothing is going wrong.

Moreover, they are not mistaken in their feelings because this time, the danger is greater than the goblins. The company, surrounded by wolves called the wild Wargs,⁸⁸ sees the solution in climbing trees. The company, having tried to get out of the mountain in the endless halls in the goblin tunnels, is in a more desperate situation this time. Bilbo, who takes advantage of the ring to escape from the tunnels, is the person in the group who feels the most helpless because “[e]ven magic rings are not much use against wolves-especially against the evil packs that lived under the shadow of the goblin-infested mountains, over the Edge of the Wild on the borders of the unknown” (Tolkien, 1976: 103). Since the wolves’ sense of smell is very developed, they can easily find those who hide, even if they cannot see it, while the company is trapped in the top of the trees; Bilbo’s use of the ring does not seem to work this time. The situation becomes even more dangerous when Gandalf, who understands the conversation of the Wargs, learns why they were gathering there, as the Wargs and

⁸⁸ “[F]or so the evil wolves over the Edge of the Wild were named” (Tolkien, 1976: 105).

Goblins agreed to raid the surrounding villages that night: “Wargs and the goblins often helped one another in wicked deeds [...] they sometimes used to go on raids, especially to get food or slaves to work for them. Then they often got the Wargs to help and shared the plunder” (Tolkien, 1976: 105). Trapped in the treetops, the company seems to have little to do unless the Wargs leave under the trees until Gandalf sets fire with a spell that he uses from nature: “He gathered the huge pinecones from the branches of his tree. Then he set one alight with bright blue fire, and threw it whizzing down among the circle of the wolves” (Tolkien, 1976: 107).

As mentioned earlier, Gandalf’s magic as a wizard using the energy of nature shows his bond with nature. Here, too, starting a fire using pinecones, which are the only material in his hand, and this fire causing indignation among the Wargs helps ensure the company’s safety for a while. This wise tactic of Gandalf works because the sound of the commotion alarms the Lord of the Eagles sitting on a rock on the eastern side of the mountain. Considering that the Eagles are in the service of Manwë and Gandalf is a Maiar serving him, it is undoubtedly a fact that the only way of rescue for the company stuck in the treetop is the sky and that only Manwë can provide this: “The wizard and the eagle-lord appeared to know one another slightly, and even to be on friendly terms” (Tolkien, 1976: 113). Rescuing the group from the Wargs and Goblins and transporting them to safety later bestows the Lord of the Eagles with a noble mission: he becomes the “King of All Birds”⁸⁹ and wears the golden crown dwarves have given him.

Since the company, who survived this danger safely, needs a resting place as in every post-danger, this time the resting place is Beorn’s house. The area where Beorn lives and the house he lives in is very important from an ecological point of view because that area has its own flora and fauna and also shows Beorn’s connection and harmony with the natural environment:

⁸⁹ “King of the birds, deputy or Messenger of the highest heavenly godhead and of the fire of Heaven, the Sun, at which it alone dares stare without burning its eyes” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 323).

At any rate he is under no enchantment but his own. He lives in an oak-wood⁹⁰ and has a great wooden house; and as a man he keeps cattle and horses which are nearly as marvellous as himself. They work for him and talk to him. He does not eat them; neither does he hunt or eat wild animals. He keeps hives and hives of great fierce bees, and lives most on cream and honey (Tolkien, 1976: 118-9).

The wooden house where Beorn lives and the animals he keeps make him the protector of the area, not the owner. Also, giant bees add a unique feature to the fauna of that region. Like Tom Bombadil in *The Lord of the Rings*, Beorn communicates with animals and sees them as companions rather than using them as servants. Welcoming Gandalf, dwarves, and Bilbo in his home, Beorn, just like Bombadil, is indifferent to earthly materials - especially gold, silver, jewellery, which dwarves are excited about even telling. Just as the interior of Bombadil's house is a protected area against external damage, Beorn's house is like a depiction of a well-preserved nature: "[T]he pillars of the house standing tall behind them, and dark at the top like trees of the forest" (Tolkien, 1976: 128).

As always, the company's location after Beorn's resting place is a wild forest with its own ecological rule, like the Old Forest in *The Lord of the Rings*, full of dangers and provided by ecotone. In the entrance, which is depicted as a dark wall, what attracts the company's attention is that the birds are no longer singing, and the deer and rabbits disappear. It can be seen that even the animals stay within certain boundaries in this region where the fauna changes, and they also diversify according to the ecotone differences. When they come to the edge of the forest, the company "were resting almost beneath the great overhanging boughs of its outer trees. Their trunks were huge and gnarled, their branches twisted, their leaves were dark and long. Ivy⁹¹ grew on them and trailed along the ground" (Tolkien, 1976: 136). After Gandalf leaves them at the forest entrance, it can be understood that this forest is the most dangerous place on this journey. So it is not for nothing that Bilbo's initiation is completed in this forest.⁹²

⁹⁰ "The oak was worshipped by the Celts, for whom its trunk, knotty branches, thick foliage and the symbolism it possessed, made it the emblem of hospitality and the equivalent of a temple" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 710). Like Tom Bombadil in *The Lord of the Rings*, Beorn in *The Hobbit* creates his own spirituality within his own woodland. His house resembles a temple.

⁹¹ "Dionysus used ivy as he used the vine, to carry away in mystical delirium those women who refused him worship" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 546). Beorn warns the dwarves against the enchantment of the stream inside the Mirkwood, which creates a kind of delirium situation when it is drunk or swam inside it.

⁹² Look at Chapter Three for the description of this completion, on page 176.

Unlike Bilbo, Frodo's initiation does not occur in the Old Forest, which is the first danger of the Shire's exit, because Frodo's is a more complicated and longer journey than Bilbo's journey. While Bilbo goes north, Frodo has to go south. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, Frodo, like Bilbo, is forced to fight against the dangers of this journey through the first wood he enters. Likewise, the first danger signals appear before the group⁹³ in the Old Forest with the magical pathways mentioned by Merry. When the hobbits trying to climb the East-West Road, which is typically located in the north of the forest, realizes that the path they find is dragging them to the south, it is too late: "They were being headed off, and were simply following a course chosen for them – eastwards and southwards, into the heart of the Forest and not out of it" (Tolkien, 2004: 114). Their drift into the middle of the Forest is evidence that another force is drawing them there. And then it turns out that this power is Old Man Willow, one of the evil forces deep in the Forest. Thanks to Tom Bombadil, the hobbits who survived Old Man Willow also manage to get out of the Forest, and the ecotone stands out with this exit:

They stepped out from the Forest, and found a wide sweep of grass welling up before them. The river, now small and swift, was leaping merrily down to meet them, glinting here and there in the light of the stars, which were already shining in the sky. The grass under their feet was smooth and short, as if it had been mown or shaven. The eaves of the Forest behind were clipped, and trim as a hedge. The path was now plain before them, well-tended and bordered with stone (Tolkien, 2004: 121).

Compared to Bilbo's journey, Frodo's journey consists of regions that will cause more ecotones. After leaving Bree with Aragorn, they do not want to use the East-West Road so much to avoid being seen; Aragorn takes them on more difficult paths and roads. This journey is difficult for the four hobbits, with the prospect of a Ringwraith appearing at any moment.

The fact that Aragorn is taking them towards Weathertop and not knowing what they will encounter makes this journey even more dangerous. Frodo, who enters such wilderness for the first time after Bree, "fully realized his homelessness and danger" (Tolkien, 2004: 188). In this way, Frodo is cultivating his spiritual side, although he is not aware of it. Feeling "homeless" allows him to engage and communicate with nature,

⁹³ After Crickhollow, Merry is included in the group and they are now four.

just like “hermits” who live “in inhabited regions,” “forest dwellers or homeless wanderers” of India, or Buddhist “monks” who live “in the depths of the natural world” (Taylor, 2005: 167).

The Fellowship of the Ring, established with the Elrond’s Council held at Rivendell, must cross the Misty Mountains as Bilbo and the dwarves did. Likewise, the weather is an obstacle to the company trying to cross them. They try to reach the Redhorn Pass on Mount Caradhras, “but the weather may prove a more deadly enemy than any” (Tolkien, 2004: 286). Boromir then tells the company about a belief in Gondor:

‘I wonder if this is a contrivance of the Enemy,’ said Boromir. ‘They say in my land that he can govern the storms in the Mountains of Shadow that stand upon the borders of Mordor. He has strange powers and many allies.’ ‘His arm has grown long indeed,’ said Gimli, ‘if he can draw snow down from the North to trouble us here three hundred leagues away.’ ‘His arm has grown long,’ said Gandalf” (Tolkien, 2004: 288).

Although Gimli’s astonishment is true, Gandalf’s response to him confronts the company that even though they are only three hundred leagues from Mordor, the enemy’s spies are roaming everywhere. Even these spies can intervene in certain natural phenomena like Sauron. As a result, Misty Mountains is impenetrable again. Wind, snow, and avalanche are in the hands of the enemy.

The weather changes after a while as the company retreats to the direction they came upon, looking for another way to cross the Misty Mountains: “That day the weather changed again, almost as if it was at the command of some power that had no longer any use for snow, since they had retreated from the pass, a power that wished now to have a clear light in which things that moved in the wild could be seen from far away” (Tolkien, 2004: 299). The worst thing that could happen to the company aiming to reach the other side of the Mountains by passing through the Moria takes place, and one of the Balrogs, Melkor’s greatest servants in the Elder Days, confronts them in the mines. Gandalf is the only person in the company who can fight this strength, and as a matter of fact, Gandalf fights one-on-one with the Balrog, showing a great struggle. Gandalf, the company’s only salvation, falls to the bottom of the mines with the Balrog by fighting, and the company manages to reach the eastern side of the Mountains without him.

The company trying to reach Lothlórien under the leadership of Aragorn and Boromir encounters the Nimrodel River. In addition to protecting the woods of Lothlórien, another feature of this river is that it offers healing:

‘Here is Nimrodel!’ said Legolas. ‘Of this stream the Silvan Elves made many songs long ago, and still we sing them in the North, remembering the rainbow on its falls, and the golden flowers that floated in its foam. All is dark now and the Bridge of Nimrodel is broken down. I will bathe my feet, for it is said that the water is healing to the weary.’ He went forward and climbed down the deep-cloven bank and stepped into the stream. ‘Follow me!’ he cried. ‘The water is not deep. Let us wade across! On the further bank we can rest and the sound of the falling water may bring us sleep and forgetfulness of grief.’ One by one they climbed down and followed Legolas. For a moment Frodo stood near the brink and let the water flow over his tired feet. It was cold but its touch was clean, and as he went on and it mounted to his knees, he felt that the stain of travel and all weariness was washed from his limbs (Tolkien, 2004: 338-9).

It is tender and embracing, after the harsh and brutal side of the Misty Mountains they passed. Finding such a soothing river after a very violent episode is in line with Tolkien’s plot, both geographically and in terms of ecotone. There is a relief after every danger and a new danger after every relief. The sensation of impulse brought by cold water to a body with an adrenaline rush makes Frodo forget the remaining fatigue of the Misty Mountains. This relief brought by the river is a sign that the company will have times that will make them forget all the troubles in the upcoming days. The fame of the land of Lórien has been heard by every race living in Middle-earth. Even if the company is blindfolded when entering this famous land, they can sense the beautiful natural environment of Lórien. With its scent of the trees and the grass, “the rustle of the leaves,” the distant noise of the river, the chirping of birds in the sky, the blazing of the sun, Lórien is the exact equivalent of the mission the Elves sought to accomplish in Middle-earth (Tolkien, 2004: 349).

The hobbits with limited knowledge of the Elves are very surprised that the Elves of Lórien live in treehouses. Nevertheless, as they spend time with them, environmental awareness of the hobbits begins to increase. For example, Frodo’s first contact with the tree is crucial, as he will climb it to meet Galadriel, the Lady of the Galadhrim: “As Frodo prepared to follow him [Haldir], he laid his hand upon the tree beside the ladder: never before had he been so suddenly and so keenly aware of the feel

and texture of a tree's skin and of the life within it. He felt a delight in wood and the touch of it, neither as forester nor as carpenter; it was the delight of the living tree itself" (Tolkien, 2004: 351). Now Frodo truly understands the essence of the trees; he is aware of it. Frodo's feeling of the tree as a living creature rather than a material to be used or a tool to exploit also helps him understand the Elves' purpose in Middle-earth. Mallorn trees, called "living towers," are like the representative of the land of Lórien (Tolkien, 2004: 353), and on the greatest of these trees, Galadriel and Celeborn live.

Having stayed in Lórien for nearly a month, the company moves on to the most difficult phase of their journey. After this relaxation point, the dangers they will face will be even greater because they are increasingly closer to Sauron's land, Mordor. As they get closer to Mordor, the ecotone becomes more and more noticeable. Traces of the great battles fought on the borders of Mordor in the Second Age can still be seen on the land:

As the third day of their voyage wore on the lands changed slowly: *the trees thinned and then failed altogether*. On the eastern bank to their left they saw long formless slopes stretching up and away toward the sky; brown and withered they looked, *as if fire had passed over them, leaving no living blade of green: an unfriendly waste without even a broken tree or a bold stone to relieve the emptiness*. They had come to the Brown Lands that lay, *vast and desolate*, between Southern Mirkwood and the hills of the Eryn Muil. *What pestilence or war or evil deed of the Enemy had so blasted all that region* even Aragorn could not tell (Tolkien, 2004: 380).

The traces of the war and the enormous damage done by the enemy to the environment are particularly surprising to the company's most "self-contained" hobbits. Orcs are the biggest responsible for this damage to the environment in this part of Middle-earth.

With Merry and Pippin kidnapped by Orcs sent by Saruman, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli begin to pursue them.⁹⁴ Since these Orcs sent by Saruman can move during the daylight compared to Sauron's Orcs, this chase becomes a tiring adventure for Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli. At the same time, the trio's comments about the damage the Orcs have done to the environment along the way are also noticeable: "No other folk make such a trampling," said Legolas. "It seems their delight to slash and beat down

⁹⁴ Thus, the fellowship is divided into two groups. While Frodo and Sam search for a way to Mordor, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli try to rescue the kidnapped hobbits.

growing things that are not even in their way” (Tolkien, 2004: 419). Legolas is referring to the fact that the Orcs, despite not hindering their journey along the way, damage the plants and trees they encounter. Besides, all the lands where they set foot are “bruised and blackened” for the Orcs’ evil intentions (Tolkien, 2004: 424). However, the trio is delighted when they set foot on the green grass of Rohan in the chase that curves towards Rohan:

At the bottom they came with a strange suddenness on the grass of Rohan. It swelled like a green sea up to the very foot of the Eryn Muil. The falling stream vanished into a deep growth of cresses and water-plants, and they could hear it tinkling away in green tunnels, down long gentle slopes towards the fens of Entwash Vale far away. They seemed to have left winter clinging to the hills behind. Here the air was softer and warmer, and faintly scented, as if spring was already stirring and the sap was flowing again in herb and leaf. Legolas took a deep breath, like one that drinks a great draught after long thirst in barren places. ‘Ah! the green smell!’ he said. ‘It is better than much sleep’ (Tolkien, 2004: 423-4).

As can be seen in the quotation, even though the land of Rohan is adjacent to Saruman’s Isengard, hope is still green here. As the last days of winter are experienced,⁹⁵ the awakening of the land and its movement with the change of season gives hope and energy to this trio chasing the Orcs. As an elf, what Legolas needs is the scent of this green rather than sleep. The same mood is observed in Aragorn.⁹⁶

As an elf, Legolas’ vision is so sharp, and relying on Legolas’ view when following the Orcs, the group returns this time to Aragorn when the Orcs disappear. Aragorn can communicate with the earth by resting his ear on the ground. By listening to the earth, he can understand who is walking on it:

⁹⁵ February 27.

⁹⁶ It is not possible to say the same thing about Gimli because he is a dwarf. Gimli feels better in the mountains and mines, not in the open green area or in the forest.

‘I fear they have passed beyond my sight from hill or plain, under moon or sun,’ said Legolas. ‘*Where sight fails the earth may bring us rumour,*’ said Aragorn. ‘*The land must groan under their hated feet.*’ He stretched himself upon the ground with his ear pressed against the turf. He lay there motionless, for so long a time that Gimli wondered if he had swooned or fallen asleep again. Dawn came glimmering, and slowly a grey light grew about them. At last he rose, and now his friends could see his face: it was pale and drawn, and his look was troubled. ‘The rumour of the earth is dim and confused,’ he said. ‘Nothing walks upon it for many miles about us. Faint and far are the feet of our enemies’ (Tolkien, 2004: 426).

Realizing that the Orcs are far away from them, the group decides to move even faster. However, as they continue, “[t]he orc-trail grew fainter” (Tolkien, 2004: 427), the reason for which is understood later. Éomer and his horse-men, who set out from Eastfold against King Théoden, slaughtered these Orcs who wandered east of Rohan. However, because Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli do not yet know this, they attribute the lost traces of the Orcs to evil. They are right because the east side of Rohan is already under Saruman’s evil influence as Aragorn feels it as such:

There is something strange at work in this land. I distrust the silence. I distrust even the pale Moon. The stars are faint; and I am weary as I have seldom been before, weary as no Ranger should be with a clear trail to follow. There is some will that lends speed to our foes and sets an unseen barrier before us: a weariness that is in the heart more than in the limb (Tolkien, 2004: 428).

This “weariness” voiced by Aragorn is the reaction of the land under Saruman’s influence. These lands have often been crushed under Orcs’ feet; this Moon has often witnessed the damage caused by the Orcs to the land. Therefore, even the Moon has lost its effect, and the earth has become silent.

Likewise, this damage will continue in the war in Helm’s Deep. Théoden, the King of Rohan, will talk about this damage already done to his land while continuing to take refuge in Helm’s Deep: “‘They bring fire,’ said Théoden, ‘and they are burning as they come, rick, cot, and tree. This was a rich vale and had many homesteads. Alas for my folk!’” (Tolkien, 2004: 530). Théoden regrets that Saruman, who once helped Rohan a lot, turned out to be a traitor, as much as he regrets that the Orcs sent by

Saruman did so much damage to his land. As a King, his grief for losing his people's lands makes Théoden the "competent and respected, even beloved leader of his people" (Van De Bergh, 2006: 218).

The most striking thing about this war is that the Huorns are involved in this war and fight against the Orcs. A great surprise awaits the people of Rohan, who look at the battlefield after the end of the war with the first light of the morning:

The land had changed. Where before the green dale had lain, its grassy slopes lapping the ever-mounting hills, there now a forest loomed. Great trees, bare and silent, stood, rank on rank, with tangled bough and hoary head; their twisted roots were buried in the long green grass. Darkness was under them. Between the Dike and the eaves of that nameless wood only two open furlongs lay. There now covered the proud hosts of Saruman, in terror of the king and in terror of the trees (Tolkien, 2004: 541).

This surprise also brings an end to the Orcs that have lost the war because the Huorns do not allow any living Orcs to escape from the battlefield. This sudden change of vegetation astonishes everyone except Gandalf. So everyone thinks that Gandalf is behind this, but he answers as follows: "'The trees?' he said. 'Nay, I see the wood as plainly as do you. But that is no deed of mine. It is a thing beyond the counsel of the wise. Better than my design, and better even than my hope the event has proved.'" (Tolkien, 2004: 543). When Théoden asks, "Then if not yours, whose is the wizardry?" his reply reveals the truth of a much more ancient power: "'It is not wizardry, but a power far older,' said Gandalf: 'a power that walked the earth, ere elf sang or hammer rang'" (Tolkien, 2004: 544). This power is the earth's own power. This war is a war waged by the land and the trees against those who harm them. This is the awakening of the earth and its response to evil. This power is not involved in this war because of helping Men or other races. They only protect their rights, just as Legolas says: "It is Orcs that they hate. For they do not belong here and know little of Elves and Men" (Tolkien, 2004: 547).

The fact that this war was won by the Huorns affects Théoden the most. Up to that point, Théoden, who thought that the Huorns or Ents were merely legends, sees that these beings can roam the earth like themselves. He speaks with environmental consciousness: "Long we have tended our beasts and our fields, built our houses, wrought our tools, or ridden away to help in the wars of Minas Tirith. And that we

called the life of Men, the way of the world. We cared little for what lay beyond the borders of our land” (Tolkien, 2004: 550). The fact that the Men have only their own problems, not being aware of natural beauties and considering the environment as their own, causes Théoden to say that the Men in Middle-earth have a humanist point of view, and that they do not value any being other than their own existence. Thereupon, the following conversation between Gandalf and Théoden implies how we endanger all other beings as well as ourselves in today’s world:

‘For not only the little life of Men is now endangered, but the life also of those things which you have deemed the matter of legend. You are not without allies, even if you know them not.’ ‘Yet also I should be sad,’ said Théoden. ‘For however the fortune of war shall go, may it not so end that much that was fair and wonderful shall pass for ever out of Middle-earth?’ ‘It may,’ said Gandalf. ‘The evil of Sauron cannot be wholly cured, nor made as if it had not been. But to such days we are doomed’ (Tolkien, 2004: 550).

This speech summarizes many things discussed already. First of all, many inventions we make to develop our civilizations in today’s world, technological tools and equipment, houses, roads and bridges we build, the water we pollute will not only end us one day but also other living and non-living beings. The situation is no different at both ends of the case. Therefore, it is not only the “x” animal or the “y” plant that is in danger of extinction but human beings with a population of 7.863.738.383.⁹⁷ Secondly, it is a great mistake that we feel that we can save them from the danger of extinction by considering ourselves superior. Therefore we feel as if they are dependent on us in this regard as in every other issue. There is also an indisputable fact: we can save them from this danger by not endangering their lives. If we realize that we are not at the top of this hierarchy but are “allies” with them, we at least allow these beauties to continue their own motions.⁹⁸ Finally, evil⁹⁹ is present all the time. Nevertheless, as Gandalf says, “to such days we are doomed.” So Gandalf tells us again what we need to do: “Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that

⁹⁷ Human population in the world on May 5, 2021 at 23:33 (<https://www.worldometers.info/tr/>)

⁹⁸ The motion referred to here is the ongoing mobility of living or non-living beings.

⁹⁹ Here, I mean ecocide.

those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule” (Tolkien, 2004: 879).

2.5. Tom Bombadil as a Nature Spirit

It is necessary to open a separate subheading for Tom Bombadil, although he is mentioned many times before. Bombadil has a unique character in Middle-earth and is Tolkien’s way of presenting nature as a character in his legendarium. He lives with his wife Goldberry near the River Withywindle between the Old Forest and the Barrow-downs. He rescues the hobbits from an evil tree called Old Man Willow and hosts them in his house. Since it is not known where his lineage came from, there are many theories about his character. There are comments that he could be a Vala, a Maia, or an Elf. Some even consider it to be Ilúvatar himself. But given that Ilúvatar is outside of Eä and never gets into it, this last comment does not seem very appropriate. Apart from these, the interpretation that fits the character of Bombadil best and is the most suitable for this dissertation is that Tom Bombadil is a nature spirit. As R. J. Reilly (2004) mentions, “when Tom Bombadil speaks, it is as if Nature itself – nonrational, interested only in life and in growing things – were speaking” (95).

He is responsible for the garden of his house, the forest near his house, the trees in that forest, and everything that grows. He does not care a bit about earthly events. Instead, he sings and dances in his colourful clothes. He provides a peaceful rest to the hobbits with his colourful clothes carrying every colour of nature and his cheerful disposition. Perhaps one of the most important features that make Bombadil unique is that he does not own anything in nature.¹⁰⁰ Instead, he is the “unfallen ‘master of wood, water and hill’ precisely because he does not own them. Rather he receives everything as a gift and is himself a gift-giver, who is first seen bringing water-lilies to Goldberry” (Milbank, 2004: 41). His ability to talk to trees or plants, to communicate with them, and to enable every living thing to survive without allowing its essence to deteriorate shows that “Tom Bombadil is clearly a *genius loci*” (Curry, 2004: 117; emphasis in

¹⁰⁰ When Frodo asked Goldberry who Bombadil is, Goldberry’s answer is: “‘He is the Master of wood, water, and hill.’ ‘Then all this strange land belongs to him?’ ‘No indeed!’ she answered, and her smile faded. ‘That would indeed be a burden,’ she added in a low voice, as if to herself. ‘The trees and the grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves. Tom Bombadil is the Master. No one has ever caught old Tom walking in the forest, wading in the water, leaping on the hill-tops under light and shadow. He has no fear. Tom Bombadil is master’” (Tolkien, 2004: 124). It is noteworthy that Goldberry says that Bombadil’s possession of that land would be a burden for him. In addition, her claim that every living thing in that land belongs to each other is a reflection of a biocentric or ecocentric view.

original).¹⁰¹ Stanton (2001) further extends this interpretation to the following conclusion: “[S]ince he was in Middle-earth before the forms of nature itself, he can be thought of as a kind of ground for nature’s being [...] he may be *sui generis*” (29-30; emphasis in original).¹⁰²

When examined politically (when there is a war of the good and evil) it is seen that Bombadil does not take sides (Stanton, 2001: 30). He is neither interested nor indifferent to the war against evil.¹⁰³ He clearly states that he is not interested in this war, but he is conscious enough to know that evil will destroy the place where he now protects if this war is not won by the good.¹⁰⁴ However, his distant attitude to both sides as a natural force indicates that he is duly fulfilling his Middle-earth mission.

Another character as important as Bombadil is his wife, Goldberry. The origin of Goldberry, also called the River-daughter, is not known as that of Bombadil; however, it is known that she is “as ancient as Spring” (Tolkien, 2004: 122). If Bombadil is the spirit of the earth, the idea that Goldberry could also be the spirit of the waters comes forward: “[S]he is the river’s daughter—a naiad, or water spirit” (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 20). The description of Goldberry as water-lilies may also prove that as such:

¹⁰¹ Spirit of the place

¹⁰² Of his, her, its, or their own kind; unique

¹⁰³ Also, the Ring of Power does not affect Bombadil. This shows that he has a natural defence against evil power: “Then suddenly he put it [the Ring] to his eye and laughed. For a second the hobbits had a vision, both comical and alarming, of his bright blue eye gleaming through a circle of gold. Then Tom put the Ring round the end of his little finger and held it up to the candlelight. For a moment the hobbits noticed nothing strange about this. Then they gasped. There was no sign of Tom disappearing!” (Tolkien, 2004: 132-3). The Ring, which makes the wearer invisible, cannot do anything to Bombadil. This shows that Bombadil is more than material power. Likewise, the wearer is not invisible to Bombadil: “‘Hey there!’ cried Tom, glancing towards him with a most seeing look in his shining eyes. ‘Hey! Come Frodo, there! Where be you a-going? Old Tom Bombadil’s not as blind as that yet. Take off your golden ring! Your hand’s more fair without it’” (Tolkien, 2004: 133). Another power of Bombadil is that he can hear voices even through walls and underground, which can save hobbits from Barrow-wights.

¹⁰⁴ Bombadil’s attitude, unaffected by the Ring of Power, is even mentioned in Elrond’s Council. Some participants offer to take the Ring to Bombadil: “‘Could we not still send messages to him and obtain his help?’ asked Erethor. ‘It seems that he has a power even over the Ring.’ ‘No, I should not put it so,’ said Gandalf. ‘Say rather that the Ring has no power over him. He is his own master. But he cannot alter the Ring itself, nor break its power over others. And now he is withdrawn into a little land, within bounds that he has set, though none can see them, waiting perhaps for a change of days, and he will not step beyond them.’ ‘But within those bounds nothing seems to dismay him,’ said Erethor. ‘Would he not take the Ring and keep it there, for ever harmless?’ ‘No,’ said Gandalf, ‘not willingly. He might do so, if all the free folk of the world begged him, but he would not understand the need. And if he were given the Ring, he would soon forget it, or most likely throw it away. Such things have no hold on his mind. He would be a most unsafe guardian; and that alone is answer enough.’ ‘But in any case,’ said Glorfindel, ‘to send the Ring to him would only postpone the day of evil. He is far away. We could not now take it back to him, unguessed, unmarked by any spy. And even if we could, soon or late the Lord of the Rings would learn of its hiding place and would bend all his power towards it. Could that power be defied by Bombadil alone? I think not. I think that in the end, if all else is conquered, Bombadil will fall, Last as he was First; and then Night will come’” (Tolkien, 2004: 265-6).

In a chair, at the far side of the room facing the outer door, sat a woman. Her long yellow hair rippled down her shoulders; her gown was green, green as young reeds, shot with silver like beads of dew; and her belt was of gold, shaped like a chain of flag-lilies set with the pale-blue eyes of forget-me-nots. About her feet in wide vessels of green and brown earthenware, white water-lilies were floating, so that she seemed to be enthroned in the midst of a pool (Tolkien, 2004: 123).

As it can be seen, Goldberry sitting in the chair is transmitted as if she were a water-lily sitting in the middle of a pool. At the same time, the presence of Goldberry provides comfort to the hobbits. The clarity of her voice, the water-lily appearance, and her reverence for Bombadil fascinate them. She tells them that they should be no longer afraid of the wild environment, as they will be under the roof of Bombadil tonight: “For you are still afraid, perhaps, of mist and tree-shadows and deep water, and untame things. Fear nothing! For tonight you are under the roof of Tom Bombadil” (Tolkien, 2004: 123).

The mist outside, tree-shadows, and wildlife cannot enter Bombadil’s house because Bombadil’s natural energy surrounds it. The hobbits who spend a few nights in that house listen with interest to the stories about the wildlife or the Forest that Bombadil tells them. These stories allow hobbits to better understand and connect with wildlife: “As they listened, they began to understand the lives of the Forest, apart from themselves, indeed to feel themselves as the strangers where all other things were at home” (Tolkien, 2004: 129-30). This developed understanding is crucial because the hobbits put aside their perspective and adopt an ecocentric perspective. In this case, it is not the wildlife that is strange or other there, but the hobbits themselves. After rescuing the hobbits from the Barrow-wights, and when the hobbits talk about their missing of clothes, that he says: “Cast off these cold rags! Run naked on the grass” (Tolkien, 2004: 144) invites them to be one and all with nature.

Finally, when he mentions the pony he will ride while accompanying the hobbits to the road in the North, he states that the pony is a companion, not a servant of him: “My four-legged friend; though I seldom ride him, and he wanders often far, free upon the hillsides” (Tolkien, 2004: 145). Bombadil does not ride the pony unless he sees it necessary and that the pony roams freely. This highlights the importance of animal rights for Bombadil.

With all this in mind, as Dickerson and Evans (2006) say, “he [Tom Bombadil] may be the most explicit, concrete embodiment of the natural world—an incarnation, we might say, of environment itself. Tom may not *fit into* Middle-earth because he *stands for it*” (19; emphasis in original). The origin of Tom Bombadil also confirms Dickerson and Evans’ discourse:

Tom was here before the river and the trees; Tom remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn. He made paths before the Big People, and saw the little People arriving. He was here before the Kings and the graves and the Barrow-wights. When the Elves passed westward, Tom was here already, before the seas were bent. He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless – before the Dark Lord came from Outside (Tolkien, 2004: 131).

As mentioned before, the fact that Bombadil has a history as ancient as Middle-earth shows that he has unity with this world. Likewise, the words Elrond chooses when referring to Bombadil in the Council give clues about Bombadil’s entity in Middle-earth: “But I had forgotten Bombadil, if indeed this is still the same that walked the woods and hills long ago, and even then was *older than the old*. That was not then his name. Iarwain Ben-adar we called him, *oldest and fatherless*” (Tolkien, 2004: 265). Thus, Bombadil seems to represent the vital force of Middle-earth in terms of biocentrism.

2.6. Trees in Middle-earth: Cosmo-Ecological Entities

It would be very suitable to open this subheading with a quotation that summarizes the importance of the trees in general:

Even leaving continuity, renewal and joy offered by ‘tree-love’ to one side – which cannot be done forever – let us be clear that we are talking about living things which cool and filter the air, absorbing pollutants and noise; regulate and purify rainfall, and retain and enrich the soil; produce oxygen (a mature tree can produce enough to meet the annual requirements of 10 people) and provide shelter and shade as well as aesthetic satisfaction, historical continuity and psychological refreshment; give wildlife somewhere to live; and provide renewable resources of timber, compost, fuel, and medicines. For these attributes alone, trees are worthy of reverence. But they are also living symbols, spiritually and culturally as well as physically (Curry, 2004: 97).

Besides the value of Curry's information about trees, his last sentence draws attention because trees have a vital place in world mythologies. A tree symbol appears in almost all creation myths. These tree images, which are very important at the symbolic level, assume a role that culturally and naturally connects all the living beings. Trees that release their roots deep into the soil and extend their branches to the sky are the main elements of the bridge established between living/non-living beings and nature. In this context, besides their physical facilities, the psychological bond established with trees should not be ignored. If the trees are lost, then the connection with nature will be lost accordingly. As Bate (1991) states, "[t]he 'Romantic ecology' reverences the green earth because it recognizes that neither physically nor psychologically can we live without green things" (40). The connection aforementioned, and in Bate's, is valid for all the green in the world. Apart from the physical facilities of trees, the connection they provide is indisputable. In his book, Curry (2004) shares an excerpt from "The dying fall" written by Jay Griffiths to *The Guardian* on February 14, 1996:

Conversely, there is an awful, sick feeling of wrongness when a big tree falls. As Jay Griffiths writes, 'felled trees lying flat' are like 'the horizontal lines of sadness in the human face, or in the human form knocked flat to the ground. Hope, by contrast, is vertical – in the standing tree, in the standing human figure. The only hope for the trees is that enough people will stand up for them, answering an ancient and universal call' (99).

As mentioned before, trees whose roots are in the soil and branches extending to the sky have taken place in mythologies as a symbol of standing upright. "[T]he tree represents-whether ritually and concretely, or in mythology and cosmology, or simply symbolically-*the living cosmos*, endlessly renewing itself," (267; emphasis in original) states Eliade (1958).

Yggdrasil, the famous tree of Norse mythology, "formed the centre of the universe, and beneath its roots lay three regions, those of the gods, the giants, and the dead" (Davidson, 1990: 190), which is also called the World Tree. The Cosmic Tree in shamanism "rises at the center of the earth, the place of earth's 'umbilicus,' and its upper branches touch the palace of Bai Ülgän" (Eliade, 1989: 270).¹⁰⁵ Apart from symbolizing the eternal cycle of the universe, these trees are also important from a

¹⁰⁵ Also, the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil in the Garden of Eden that caused the "Fall of Man" in Genesis is a cosmic tree.

cosmic perspective because of their location in the “centre.” The tree ordination of the monks encountered in Buddhist practices is interpreted by Susan Darlington as follows: “It is important to note that in this ceremony as in all tree ordinations, the monks did not claim to be fully ordaining the tree, as that status is reserved for humans only. The ceremony was used symbolically to remind people that nature should be treated as equal with humans, deserving of respect and vital for human as well as for all life” (Sahni, 2008: 16). As Sahni quotes, Darlington’s point is that the Buddhist monks’ purpose of tree ordination is to show men that they are one and all with nature.

As trees, the most important representatives of nature, are turned into a means of communication with the divinities, people’s respect for trees also represents faith in the divine. In this way, trees become representatives of the entire cosmos. The important thing here is that the particular and the whole are interconnected as Eliade (1958) states: “[T]he *Whole* exists within each *significant fragment* [...] because every significant fragment *reproduces* the Whole” (269; emphasis in original). Referring to the regeneration of the cosmos, Eliade (1958) continues as follows: “[I]n the dialectic of the sacred a part (a tree, a plant) has the value of the whole (the cosmos, life) a profane thing becomes a hierophany” (324). Likewise, in Tolkien’s legendarium, trees become hierophany. Apart from the cosmic importance they acquire in the mythological context, they are also companions to the peoples of Middle-earth in eco-cultural terms. Their psychological and historical aspects cannot be overlooked either. For example, the Old Forest, where the hobbits experience danger, is not so-called for no reason, “for it was indeed ancient, a survivor of vast forgotten woods; and in it there lived yet, ageing no quicker than the hills, the fathers of the fathers of trees, remembering times when they were lords” (Tolkien, 2004: 130). These ancient trees in the Old Forest carry the historical heritage of Middle-earth in their roots and branches and become living entities to be respected in every way.

However, Tolkien does not neglect to cover this historical heritage with evil. As mentioned above, the hobbits are attacked by a tree in the Old Forest called the Old Man Willow, “who exhibits a hostility or malice in the world of nature not necessarily connected with the evil of Sauron or the Ring” (Stanton, 2001: 29). This is an indication of other evil spirits that exist in this universe. Likewise, the good spirits exist as guardians and preservationists of Middle-earth, independent of the War of the Ring. For example, the Huorns, who have slept quietly in Fangorn Forest for ages, best represent the spirit of good nature like Ents. The existence of these good spirits against evil

spirits, and even if they are involved in the War of the Ring like the Huorns, is significant in eco-mythological terms since they show that Middle-earth people are not in control, but nature.

Speaking of the Ents, it is worth noting Treebeard. Treebeard, the oldest ent in Fangorn Forest, actually gave the forest its name. Treebeard, whose real name is Fangorn, is the shepherd of the forest. The Ents, who are immortal like the Elves and are assigned to protect the forests of Middle-earth, are not walking trees, contrary to popular belief, but a completely different race with their tree-like appearance. As will be discussed in the religious analyses of the dissertation, Ents, created in a situation caused by Yavanna, exist with their giant appearances and love of trees. Neighbouring Isengard, where Saruman's stronghold is located, Treebeard, the shepherd of the forest, encourages attacking him by awakening the other Ents and Huorns who have been sleeping for a long time, as if to show that the Ents were not created in vain. Thus, the Ents and Huorns win an important battle in the War of the Ring, and they strive to reclaim Isengard, who was plundered by Saruman, on an environmental scale.

Treebeard, a natural force of ancient times like Bombadil, cannot remain neutral to this war as Bombadil did and manages to change the course of the war for the better. However, of course, the purpose here is not to accuse Bombadil of his neutrality. After all, if Bombadil represents nature itself in this mythology, Treebeard takes place as an actor of that nature. As a result, “[a]ncient evils like the Balrog and Shelob bring terror and suspense; ancient forces for good like Tom Bombadil and Treebeard bring comfort and hope” (Stanton, 2001: 119). The same restoration process described in “Hobbits/The Shire” subheading is also carried out by Treebeard for Isengard. Shattering Saruman's industrial system with the help of the Huorns, the Ents, under Treebeard's leadership, do their best to restore Isengard's former flora without wasting any time, “replacing stone and metal with trees, and grass, and orchards wherever possible” (Stanton, 2001: 90). It is also seen that the Ents, who undertake this restoration task, complete their missions in Middle-earth in this way, as Manwë says “in the forests shall walk the Shepherds of the Trees” (Tolkien, 1999: 41), in *The Silmarillion*, indicating that the Ents would protect the forests. The forests mentioned here are untouched wild forests. They are places that need to be preserved as they were created, in which the growing trees and plants can maintain their natural flow, and are untouched and uncultivated by any race of Middle-earth, as Dickerson and Evans (2006) point out: “Ents care for these places, expressing their respect for them by letting

plants, flowers, and trees grow according to the principles inherent in their nature, countenancing neither the conversion of these lands to civilized use nor the organized cultivation of growing things” (123). Thus, the preservation of wilderness explains why some forests in Middle-earth (such as the Old Forest and Fangorn) do not allow foreigners and visitors to pass through, in line with the purpose of the Ents’ creation. As a result, Dickerson and Evans (2006) categorize the ecological approach of the Hobbits, Elves, and Ents in Middle-earth as follows:

By a specific set of ecological definitions, in modern environmental terms Ents might be called preservationists, Elves (and Entwives) conservationists, and Hobbits agriculturalists. In these terms, conservation might be called the management of the earth in an effort to preserve a balance among species and to control its use for the extraction of benefits without destroying it. Preservationism, in contrast, tends to be more species specific in its objectives and to regard the environment more atomistically rather than wholistically or organically (124).

As stated in the quotation, the preservationism of the Ents is an approach inherent in the cosmos and continues independently of nature with its atomic parts and enriched with the authenticity of species. In addition, the approach preferred by the Elves and Entwives,¹⁰⁶ as mentioned above, involves both producing a control mechanism and not spoiling the existing respect with some practices applied to enhance the beauty of nature further as it was created.

The Ents created by Yavanna have a significant contribution in making the natural environment of Middle-earth appear as an entity independent of the created races. As Dickerson and Evans (2006), quoting John Elder, point out, wilderness alone carries “a spiritual value,” and therefore, it “offers a realm for human activity that does not seek to take possession and that leaves no traces” (124). In this context, the Ents are like a reflection of the cosmic trees of mythologies in Middle-earth because they have “both wisdom and knowledge, both earth and sky, and both past and present” (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 127).

The cosmic trees mentioned above are also present in Arda’s creation myth. After the destruction of the two lamps that illuminated Middle-earth by Melkor, the

¹⁰⁶ The Entwives, who were important for the survival of the Ents’ lineage, preferred gardening and abandoned the male Ents. Since they did not know where they were, the Ents were left alone in the Forest and could not breed.

Valar who went to Aman re-establish their rule there. There they created the two cosmic trees of Arda with the melody of Yavanna and with tears of Nienna:

And as they watched, upon the mound there came forth two slender shoots; and silence was over all the world in that hour, nor was there any other sound save the chanting of Yavanna. Under her song the saplings grew and became fair and tall, and came to flower; and thus there awoke in the world the Two Trees of Valinor. Of all things which Yavanna made they have most renown, and about their fate all the tales of the Elder Days are woven (Tolkien, 1999: 31).

These two trees, one of which is Telperion and the other of Laurelin, have been connected to the cosmic cycle and have grown out with the fate of Arda. The successive flowering and fading of these two trees resulted in the formation of days and hours by the Valar:

Telperion was the elder of the trees and came first to full stature and to bloom; and that first hour in which he shone, the white glimmer of a silver dawn, the Valar reckoned not into the tale of hours, but named it the Opening Hour, and counted from it the ages of their reign in Valinor. Therefore at the sixth hour of the First Day, and of all the joyful days thereafter, until the Darkening of Valinor, Telperion ceased his time of flower; and at the twelfth hour Laurelin her blossoming. And each day of the Valar in Aman contained twelve hours, and ended with the second mingling of the lights, in which Laurelin was waning but Telperion was waxing. But the light that was spilled from the trees endured long, ere it was taken up into the airs or sank down into the earth; and the dews of Telperion and the rain that fell from Laurelin Varda hoarded in great vats like shining lakes, that were to all the land of the Valar as wells of water and of light. Thus began the Days of the Bliss of Valinor; and thus began also the Count of Time (Tolkien, 1999: 31-2).

The fate of the Valar and Arda, who formed the cycle of hours and days according to the blooming and wilting of the trees, now depended on them. These Two Trees, which lie behind the critical events of the Years of the Trees, First, Second and Third Ages of Middle-earth, can be included in more than one group in Eliade's category to find out what values the tree symbolism - or vegetation in general - makes sense.

First of all, these categories of Eliade should be mentioned briefly. The first category consists of the “stone-tree-altar” pattern. It is an “*effective microcosm*” in the most ancient religions. Eliade determines the second category, “the tree as *image* of the cosmos.” The third category is determined “the tree as a cosmic theophany.” The fourth category includes determining the tree as a “*symbol of life*” and fertility. In this category, the tree is represented by the “Great Goddess” or water. In the fifth category, the tree is defined “as the centre of the world” and the “support of the universe.” In the sixth category, the “*mystical bonds*” between trees and men stand out. The presence of trees becomes important in initiation ceremonies. And in the last category, the importance of the tree as the rebirth of vegetation is emphasized (Eliade, 1958: 266-7; emphasis in original).

As mentioned above, the Two Trees of Valinor are at the centre of the cycle in Arda’s cosmogony. For this reason, the Two Trees of Valinor can easily be placed in the second category of Eliade. As mentioned in the First Chapter, theophany is the manifestation of a god to a person. These two cosmic trees created by Yavanna and Nienna were greeted with surprise by the Elves after their great migration to Valinor. The Elves, who were amazed by the light emitted by both trees, demanded from Yavanna that the Galathilion,¹⁰⁷ in the image of Telperion, be built in their own settlement, Tirion, in Aman. Likewise, Celeborn,¹⁰⁸ which was grown from the seedling of Galathilion on the island of Tol Eressëa, anchored by Ulmo on the eastern coast of Aman and was home to some of the Elves, also provided light to the Elves living on that island. These trees, which are grown from each other’s images and seedlings, ensure that the inhabitants in their location never forget the origin from where these trees came. The next stop of these trees, which were reproduced from seedlings one after another to ensure the continuity and the seedling of the tree to reach Middle-earth, was the official city Armenelos on the famous island of Númenor. Thus, this tree,¹⁰⁹ whose origin is Telperion, has reached the regions where Men live. In this sense, it can be identified that these trees are sacred to the Elves and Men as a manifestation of Yavanna and Nienna – and of course the Valar. Consequently, these Two Trees of Valinor are also in the third category in this context. When Eliade’s fourth category is looked at, it is seen that trees are identified with the Great Goddess. It can be understood that the Great Goddess

¹⁰⁷ The White Tree of Tirion

¹⁰⁸ The White Tree of Tol Eressëa

¹⁰⁹ Nimloth: The White Tree of Númenor.

mentioned here is the Goddess of the Earth, considering that Eliade examines these categories in the “Vegetation” chapter. The fact that in Arda’s cosmogony, Yavanna is the Queen of the Earth and a Valier who is responsible for the vegetation on earth; likewise, the fact that Nienna is the Lady of Tears and represents the water element is an indication that these Two Trees can also be found in the fourth category. Moreover, Dickerson and Evans’ (2006) commentary on these Two Trees makes it more meaningful to have them in this category:

Yavanna pours “all her thought of things that grow in the earth” into the making of the Two Trees. It can be said, then, that these trees embody all living things in Arda at that time, a time so early in the cosmic history of Middle-earth that Men and Elves have not yet been brought into being. The timing here makes a great deal of difference, for—read in this light—the trees must be said to embody the living essence of the biosphere, the natural world *apart from Men* (8; emphasis in original).

The same can be said for the fifth category because Telperion and Laurelin grew in Valinor, the centre of the kingdom that the Valar established in Aman. The central city of the Valar - like gods and goddesses taking responsibility for Arda and especially Middle-earth - can also be considered the centre of this universe. They are not only central, but also support this universe with the element they represent, and especially with what they did to shape it. When it comes to the sixth category, it would be correct to give the example of the bond between the Men of Middle-earth and these trees, since this mystical bond is between trees and men. As mentioned above, the trees propagated from the image of Telperion somehow came to the environment where Men lived and from there passed to Middle-earth. While Ilúvatar destroyed the island of Númenor, Sauron ordered Nimloth to be burned. Isildur, son of Elendil of Númenor, stole a fruit from the tree before the tree was burned and brought it to their new home, Middle-earth. In the established kingdom of Gondor, this tree, seeded from fruit, was first planted in Minas Ithil, Isildur’s tower.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ When Sauron’s forces attacked Minas Ithil, Isildur’s White Tree was destroyed, but Isildur managed to take another seedling from the tree before leaving the city. Later, other White Trees in Minas Tirith are always grown from this seedling.

The fate of the kingdoms of Gondor and Arnor, which established a bond with this tree, depends on it.¹¹¹ For example, when true heirs disappeared and replaced them with stewards, this tree no longer bloomed and withered¹¹² until Aragorn, the true heir of Isildur, appeared. When Pippin goes to Minas Tirith¹¹³ with Gandalf, he sees that the Guards of Citadel wear surcoats “embroidered in white a tree blossoming like snow beneath a silver crown and many-pointed stars” (Tolkien, 2004: 753). Later, while waiting to be admitted before the steward, Pippin sees the dead tree in the Court of the Fountain:

A sweet fountain played there in the morning sun, and a sward of bright green lay about it; but in the midst, drooping over the pool, stood a dead tree, and the falling drops dripped sadly from its barren and broken branches back into the clear water. Pippin glanced at it as he hurried after Gandalf. It looked mournful, he thought, and he wondered why the dead tree was left in this place where everything else was well tended. *Seven stars and seven stones and one white tree.* The words that Gandalf had murmured came back into his mind (Tolkien, 2004: 753; emphasis in original).

After the War of the Ring is won, Gandalf takes Aragorn to a barren slope of Mindolluin behind Minas Tirith, where Aragorn finds a sapling of the White Tree. Stanton’s (2001) comment on this situation is as follows: “There is another object that proves Aragorn’s claim and which more than rivals the sceptre in ancientness, but it is a work of nature, not of Man” (89). This situation, which Stanton interprets as “work of nature,” is a kind of mystical bond between trees and men that Eliade mentions in the sixth category. When Aragorn’s ascension to the throne is considered a kind of initiation ceremony, the re-plantation of the White Tree at the Court of Fountain is necessary for this tree’s existence during that ceremony.

When it comes to the last category, the contribution of these Two Trees in forming hours and days, as mentioned at the beginning, can also address the movement of weeks and months and the seasonal cycle. In this case, the rebirth of vegetation can

¹¹¹ The tree, which was planted by Isildur this time in Minas Anor (later named Minas Tirith), was destroyed with the king and his sons during the Dark Plague in the time of King Telemnar in 1636, Third Age.

¹¹² Four years after the death of the first tree, the second tree, re-planted from the seedling of the first tree by Tarondor, the new king of Gondor, lived to the end of the Kings of Gondor.

¹¹³ Gondor’s Tower of Guard

also be measured by the blooming and wilting of these trees. Moreover, the peace, happiness, and splendour of the Valar in Valinor were combined with the presence of these Trees because they became the life essence of Arda.

2.7. Desolation of Smaug, the Wasteland of Isengard and the Ashes of Mordor

In this subheading, the damage caused by the evil to the natural environment, especially in the Third Age of Middle-earth, will be revealed. As discussed in this chapter and will be discussed in the Third Chapter, Saruman and Sauron are not the only evils of Middle-earth. At least as evil dragons brought great trouble to the inhabitants of Middle-earth. In *The Hobbit*, Smaug, who is the reason the dwarves and Bilbo go on the adventure, is one of them. Their first appearance was in the First Age as the servants of Melkor/Morgoth. Until the Third Age, many dragons became famous in Middle-earth.

Hearing the wealth of the Erebor,¹¹⁴ Dwarves' Kingdom, in the Lonely Mountain in the Third Age, Smaug disbanded this kingdom and became the new owner of the treasure. Dragons, also known as guardians of treasure,¹¹⁵ are also famous for their intelligence in Tolkien's legendarium. They are capable of speaking and casting dragon-spell to fight off attacks on the treasure they gain. As can be seen in the example of Smaug, dragons, which destroy the region where they are placed in their treasure, are also one of the biggest enemies of the natural environment: "The land about them grew bleak and barren, though once, as Thorin told them, it had been green and fair. There was little grass, and before long there was neither bush nor tree, and only broken and blackened stumps to speak of ones long vanished. They were come to the Desolation of the Dragon" (Tolkien, 1976: 195). When it comes to the skirts of the Lonely Mountain, it is obvious why it is called desolation with this quotation. The region, which used to have green and fertile land, has now turned to desolate and barren lands. This place, where not a single tree grows anymore, has become the dragon's lair. This actually explains why Melkor/Morgoth chose dragons as his servants in the First Age: Dragons are very successful in destroying nature. As an example of this, it is enough to look at the environment of that area before and after Smaug conquers the Lonely Mountain and

¹¹⁴ In Thrór's time, Thorin's family was driven out of the North. They came to the Mountain which had been discovered by the ancestor of Thorin, Thárin the Old. There they founded their dwarf-kingdom and they grew rich.

¹¹⁵ See for reference: "Dragon," Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1996). *Dictionary of Symbols*, 307.

expels the dwarves from there.¹¹⁶ While the productivity of that region is at the highest level with the friendship of the Dwarves and Men¹¹⁷, some changes are observed even in the geography of that region after Smaug arrives:

Those lands had changed much since the days when dwarves dwelt in the Mountain, days which most people now remembered only as a very shadowy tradition. They had changed even in recent years, and since the last news that Gandalf had had of them. Great floods and rains had swollen the waters that flowed east; and there had been an earthquake or two (which some were inclined to attribute to the dragon—alluding to him chiefly with a curse and an ominous nod in the direction of the Mountain). The marshes¹¹⁸ and bogs had spread wider and wider on either side. Paths had vanished, and many a rider and wanderer too, if they had tried to find the lost ways across. The elf-road through the wood which the dwarves had followed on the advice of Beorn now came to a doubtful and little used end at the eastern edge of the forest; only the river offered any longer a safe way from the skirts of Mirkwood in the North to the mountain-shadowed plains beyond, and the river was guarded by the Wood-elves' king (Tolkien, 1976: 184).

After the Dwarves leave the mountain, geographical changes (spread of marshes) or events (such as earthquakes and floods) are attributed to Smaug. This connection is tantamount to floods and earthquakes, which are seen as an epiphany of an angry divine being. In addition to the barren lands created by Smaug, some birds (especially crows)

¹¹⁶ Here, one point needs to be clarified, which is why dragons only seize the treasure of the Dwarves. Unlike the Hobbits and most Elves, the Dwarves are fonder of goods, property, gold, jewellery and precious stones. Dickerson and Evans (2006) explain this indulgence as “hoarding tendency,” and they say that this tendency brings dragons closer to the Dwarves (15). They state that this connection is also common in the early medieval culture. It is a golden treasure and a magical golden ring that brought destruction to the house of Hreidmar, as described in the story of Sigurd the Volsung, the famous hero of Norse mythology. His sons killed Hreidmar out of greed, and his son named Fafnir turned himself into a dragon and became the owner of this treasure (Davidson, 1990: 43-4). At the same time, they value “the environment primarily as a source of fuel, building materials, and precious gems and metals” (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 101). And, an example from *The Hobbit*: “[T]he four dwarves sat around the table, and talked about mines and gold and troubles with the goblins, and the depredations of dragons” (Tolkien, 1976: 22).

¹¹⁷ “[I]n the great days of old, when Dale in the North was rich and prosperous, they had been wealthy and powerful, and there had been fleets of boats on the waters, and some were filled with gold and some with warriors in armour” (Tolkien, 1976: 185). What should not be overlooked here is that this wealth is mostly reflected in the gold and precious stones extracted by the Dwarves from the mines.

¹¹⁸ “The ‘dark’ side of the marshy pool protected by poisonous snakes symbolizes selfishness and the greed which refuses to share the good things of life with neighbours, even if they are dying of poverty (HAMK 12, P.61). This aspect may also bear a meaning, in line with the symbolism of treasures guarded by monsters, of the difficulties to be overcome before the cool of the oasis or the pool can be attained” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 638). An example might be that Smaug owns the entire treasure of the Dwarves and does not share it with the Lake-Town people.

spotted by the company are also seen to roam that area as spies of evil, which points to an even more important event that will take place at the end of the book.¹¹⁹

Before mentioning this incident, it would be correct to emphasize that the communication between Bilbo and the dragon is an example that proves that dragons are intelligent creatures. However, Bilbo is not a hobbit to be belittled either. The “red-golden dragon” (Tolkien, 1976: 206) that shook the ground to the sky while sleeping dreams of a warrior close to Bilbo’s depiction,¹²⁰ and he suddenly awakens and notices a smell he has never smelled before. Introducing himself to the dragon who realizes the existence of a stranger, Bilbo proves once again how suitable he is for this adventure:

“I am the clue-finder, the web-cutter, the stinging fly. I was chosen for the lucky number.” [...] “I am he that buries his friends alive and drowns them and draws them alive again from the water. I came from the end of a bag, but no bag went over me.” [...] “I am the friend of bears and the guest of eagles. I am Ringwinner and Luckwearer; and I am Barrel-rider,” went on Bilbo beginning to be pleased with his riddling (Tolkien, 1976: 213).

Looking at the quotation, it is seen that Bilbo turns his adventures up to that point into a riddle, and how true these nicknames reflect them. In this sense, it is evident that Bilbo is a very clever hobbit that cannot be underestimated and that even the dragon famous for his intelligence is confused by this riddle. Bilbo’s introducing himself to the dragon in this way reminds Sigurd to introduce himself to Fafnir. When Sigurd stabs his sharp sword into Fafnir, Fafnir asks who he is, but Sigurd does not tell Fafnir his real name because it was believed that if a dying person cursed his killer, this curse would come true. Therefore, instead of saying his real name, Sigurd introduces himself as: “The

¹¹⁹ The Battle of Five Armies: “So began a battle that none had expected; and it was called the Battle of Five Armies, and it was very terrible. Upon one side were the Goblins and the wild Wolves, and upon the other were Elves and Men and Dwarves. This is how it fell out. Ever since the fall of the Great Goblin of the Misty Mountains the hatred of their race for the dwarves had been rekindled to fury. Messengers had passed to and fro between all their cities, colonies and strongholds; for they resolved now to win the dominion of the North. Tidings they had gathered in secret ways; and in all the mountains there was a forging and an arming. Then they marched and gathered by hill and valley, going ever by tunnel or under dark, until around and beneath the great mountain Gundabad of the North, where was their capital, a vast host was assembled ready to sweep down in time of storm unawares upon the South. Then they learned of the death of Smaug, and joy was in their hearts: and they hastened night after night through the mountains, and came thus at last on a sudden from the North hard on the heels of Dain. Not even the ravens knew of their coming until they came out in the broken lands which divided the Lonely Mountain from the hills behind. How much Gandalf knew cannot be said, but it is plain that he had not expected this sudden assault” (Tolkien, 1976: 266).

¹²⁰ “[I]n which a warrior, altogether insignificant in size but provided with a bitter sword and great courage, figured most unpleasantly” (Tolkien, 1976: 207).

Noble Hart my name, and I go / A motherless man abroad; / Father I had not, as others have, / And lonely ever I live” (Thorpe, 1907: 279). As can be seen here, although talking to dragons poses a danger to fall under their spell, both Bilbo and Sigurd have managed to turn communication with dragons, the archaic creatures, to their advantage.

After meeting the stranger inside the mountain, Smaug thinks that this person was sent by the Lake-Town people and goes on an attack against them. The damage caused by the dragon to these people is described as follows: “Many took ill of wet and cold and sorrow that night, and afterwards died, who had escaped uninjured from the ruin of the town; and in the days that followed there was much sickness and great hunger” (Tolkien, 1976: 240). According to the account, although the black arrow of Bard killed the dragon, the people of Lake-Town live for a long time among the ecological and sociological ruin brought by the dragon. The dragon’s death can be read as a sign that the ecological balance of that area will change. However, the company, faced with one last danger, realizes too late that they are on the brink of a war in which they will lose their leader, Thorin Oakenshield. The dwarves who manage to reclaim their treasures with the dragon’s death pay a heavy price for their greed because the people of the Lake-Town, which the dragon inflicted, wanted the dwarves’ treasure to pay for this damage. However, the Lonely Mountain is occupied by both the Lake-Town people and the Wood-elves, especially since Thorin rejected their request. Bringing news from the environment during this invasion, the raven Roäc warns the dwarves against their greed: “The treasure is likely to be your death, though the dragon is no more!” (Tolkien, 1976: 253). Expressing his regret for his greed during his death, Thorin says: “If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world” (Tolkien, 1976: 273). As Thorin’s last words suggest, the dwarves’ fondness for these gold and precious stones allowed them to come face-to-face with dragons that were Melkor/Morgoth’s servants, leading these dragons to cause environmental damage to Middle-earth. Instead of spending their time to make Middle-earth a better place, it causes them to engage in behavior that damages the natural environment.

Exactly 78 years later, the same degree of destruction occurs, this time in Isengard. This time is not by a dragon but by Saruman the White, one of the wizards sent by the Valar to protect the Free People of Middle-earth from Sauron’s wrath. The once green and fertile lands have now disappeared with the mechanical system Saruman established and turned into industrial pollution: “The organic has been replaced by the

inorganic, the natural by the mechanical. Saruman has created an industrial wasteland [...]: pollution, disorder, noise are the order of the day” (Stanton, 2001: 58). After the battle in Helm’s Deep is over, the remaining members of the Fellowship of the Ring and Théoden make their way to Isengard. They aim to persuade Saruman and turn him back from this evil way he went through. However, before the company reaches Orthanc, Saruman’s damage to the environment is witnessed as follows:

[F]or the Fords had ever been a place full of the rush and chatter of water upon stones; but now they were silent. The beds of the stream were almost dry, a bare waste of shingles and grey sand. ‘This is become a dreary place,’ said Éomer. ‘What sickness has befallen the river? Many fair things Saruman has destroyed: has he devoured the springs of Isen too?’ ‘So it would seem,’ said Gandalf (Tolkien, 2004: 551).

The River Isen, which once flowed “deep and strong” through a green and fertile plain, is now gone. Thanks to this river, “many springs and lesser streams” fed the surrounding lands. However, now “most of the valley had become a wilderness of weeds and thorns.” In addition to this, “[b]rambles trailed upon the ground, or clambering over bush and bank, made shaggy caves where small beasts housed. No trees grew there; but among the rank grasses could still be seen the burned and axe-hewn stumps of ancient groves” (Tolkien, 2004: 553). Home to the green and fertile valleys and plains of the old times, this land has now turned into a place where stone roads lead to Isengard’s gates: “Here through the black rock a long tunnel had been hewn, closed at either end with mighty doors of iron. They were so wrought and poised upon their huge hinges, posts of steel driven into the living stone, that when unbarred they could be moved with a light thrust of the arms, noiselessly” (Tolkien, 2004: 554). While talking about tunnels built with great skill and mechanics here, “posts of steel” stuck in the “living stones” are an indication of how far Saruman has deviated from his purpose in Middle-earth.

Moreover, “[o]nce it had been green and filled with avenues, and groves of fruitful trees, watered by streams that flowed from the mountains to a lake. But no green thing grew there in the latter days of Saruman” (Tolkien, 2004: 554). Instead of fruitful trees, “[t]he roads were paved with stone-flags, dark and hard; and beside their borders [...] there marched long lines of pillars, some of marble, some of copper and of iron, joined by heavy chains” (Tolkien, 2004: 554). While Isengard’s external appearance

shows the bitter side of mechanization and industrialization, the inside is the land governed by a fascist and dictatorial ruler:

Many houses there were, chambers, halls, and passages, cut and tunnelled back into the walls upon their inner side, so that all the open circle was overlooked by countless windows and dark doors. Thousands could dwell there, workers, servants, slaves, and warriors with great store of arms; wolves were fed and stabled in deep dens beneath. The plain, too, was bored and delved. Shafts were driven deep into the ground; their upper ends were covered by low mounds and domes of stone, so that in the moonlight the Ring of Isengard looked like a graveyard of unquiet dead (Tolkien, 2004: 554).

What Saruman needs in such a form of government are “treasuries, store-houses, armouries, smithies, and great furnaces” (Tolkien, 2004: 554). The Orcs and men, whom Saruman runs day and night as slaves, produce militaristic tools that a traitor wishes to rule Middle-earth needs or will need. That is why “[i]ron wheels revolved there endlessly, and hammers thudded. At night plumes of vapour steamed from the vents, lit from beneath with red light, or blue, or venomous green” (Tolkien, 2004: 554-5). However, Isengard is actually like a small-scale example of greater destruction as narrated such:

But Saruman had slowly shaped it [Orthanc] to his shifting purposes, and made it better, as he thought, being deceived - for all those arts and subtle devices, for which he forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor; so that what he made was naught, only a little copy, a child's model or a slave's flattery, of that vast fortress, armoury, prison, furnace of great power, Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower, which suffered no rival, and laughed at flattery, biding its time, secure in its pride and its immeasurable strength (Tolkien, 2004: 555).

In Mordor, where the primary source of evil resides, things are long gone. Until Frodo and Sam reach its Black Gates, its name is only mentioned. However, at the gates, it is seen that nature has been destroyed to such an extent that it could make them (Frodo and Sam) believe the natural environment hardly existed in this part of Middle-earth. When they reach the Gates, it is impossible to see the traces of spring around Mordor,

even though the season is spring. In this region where even the seasonal cycle has disappeared, the air the hobbits breathe is ash-laden and toxic:

[B]ut here neither spring nor summer would ever come again. 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 (Tolkien, 2004: 631).

As the quotation shows, even light is “reluctant” to touch the surfaces of this area. Hobbits feel sick there. Life here is cursed, “obliterated, wiped out” (Stanton, 2001: 62). Although the Black Gates to the north of Mordor seems to be the only way for Frodo and Sam to enter the realm of Mordor, they head towards a passage called Cirith Ungol, avoiding Sauron’s Eye and the Orcs, under the guidance of Gollum. The road to this passage passes through a narrow area that stands like a border between Gondor and Mordor, the North Ithilien, which was once under the auspices of Gondor. This road is surprisingly refreshing for hobbits and readers alike, as this area, once under the auspices of Gondor, is very rich in flora. Although now abandoned and neglected, the Ithilien gardens once seemed to be one of the marvellous artefacts of the natural environment, with various trees, plants, flowers, and herbs. Despite being so close to Mordor, the spring season visibly takes hold of the whole region in this place, which creates the feeling of being miles away from Mordor’s toxic air. Despite being abandoned, “its vales and slopes show the loving care they once received” (Stanton, 2001: 62). As these three passengers pass by, the flora described is enormous:

All about them were small woods of resinous trees, fir and cedar and cypress, and other kinds unknown in the Shire, with wide glades among them; and everywhere there was a wealth of sweet-smelling herbs and shrubs. The long journey from Rivendell had brought them far south of their own land, but not until now in this more sheltered region had the hobbits felt the change of climate. Here Spring was already busy about them: fronds pierced moss and mould, larches were green-fingered, small flowers were opening in the turf, birds were singing [...] Many great trees grew there, planted long ago, falling into untended age amid a riot of careless descendants; and 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, or with their woody creeping stems mantled in deep tapestries the hidden stones; sages of many kinds putting forth blue flowers, or red, or pale green; and marjoram and new-sprouting parsleys, and many herbs of forms and scents beyond the garden-lore of Sam. The grotts and rocky walls were already starred with saxifrages and stonecrops. Primeroles and anemones were awake in the filbert-brakes; and asphodel and many lily-flowers nodded their half-opened heads in the grass: deep green grass beside the pools, where falling streams halted in cool hollows on their journey down to Anduin (Tolkien, 2004: 631).

Surprising even hobbits who are so fond of flora and garden care, this diversity fulfils their delight. Seeing the tree species they have not seen in the Shire here makes them happy. In the ecological dimension, this situation emphasizes the diversity of the ecosystem and biosystem. Besides, another feature of this garden is that some of these tree, plant, and flower varieties have mythological symbols and meanings. For example, the cedar tree is “the symbol of incorruptibility,” the cypress tree has an important place in Greek mythology because of the story that Apollo loved a boy named Cyparissus. This boy turned into a cypress tree due to grief after his tamed stag was killed (Bolton, 2002: 160). Larch is the “symbol of immortality” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 592), tamarisk is the “symbol of immortality” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 967), olive-tree is the symbol of “peace, fruitfulness, purification, strength, victory and reward” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 716) and it is the sacred tree of the Greek goddess Athena. Myrtle tree is the favourite tree of Dionysus, also known as twice-born in Greek mythology, and Dionysus offers Hades a myrtle to get his mortal mother out of the Underground. Hades frees Dionysus’s mother in exchange for the myrtle. The anemone represents Adonis, beloved of Aphrodite in Greek mythology (Dixon-

Kennedy, *Encyclopedia of Greco-Roman Mythology*, 8). Like the myrtle, asphodel is one of the sacred plants of Dionysus (Dixon -Kennedy, 1998: 115).

As can be seen from the examples, this floral diversity in the Ithilien region has an important place in the ecology and mythology of Middle-earth. These two contrasting regions revealed by Tolkien show how nature completes the ecosystem cycle where it is allowed and how the ecosystem becomes poisonous when it is not, at an elementary level. At the same time, when looked at with its mythological meanings, the biodiversity there can be read as an upright stance and “incorruptibility” against evil, bringing “a sense of life abundant—exuberant and untamed, even—but gracious, and full of possibility, and of determination to thrive, even in the face of the evil to the east” (Stanton, 2001: 62). As Frodo, Sam, and Gollum, on their way to Minas Morgul after leaving Ithilien, approach Ephel Duath,¹²¹ which marks the borders of Mordor, the sun no longer shows her face: “[T]hey watched for the slow growth of day. But no day came, only a dead brown twilight. In the East there was a dull red glare under the lowering cloud: it was not the red of dawn” (Tolkien, 2004: 699). Since it is not clear when the sun rises and when it sets, due to the dark atmosphere of this land, this causes Frodo and Sam a loss of time: “‘What’s the time? Seems to be getting late!’ ‘No it isn’t,’ said Frodo. ‘But the day is getting darker instead of lighter: darker and darker. As far as I can tell, it isn’t midday yet, and you’ve only slept for about three hours.’” (Tolkien, 2004: 699-700).

Compared to the vegetation in Ithilien, the vegetation in Morgul Valley is poisonous rather than refreshing and relaxing: “Wide flats lay on either bank, shadowy meads filled with pale white flowers. Luminous these were too, 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 rotteness filled the air” (Tolkien, 2004: 704). In this part of Middle-earth, even the scent of flowers is toxic and poisonous. Not only plants and flowers, but even the vapours of the stream flowing through the valley make the hobbits’ breath difficult. Even “their limbs were deadly tired, as if they had walked all night under a burden, or had been swimming long against a heavy tide of water” (Tolkien, 2004: 705). Poisonous from air to water, from soil to stone, this place slowly begins to make Frodo and Sam sick. They are also aware of this: “‘I don’t like anything here at all.’ said Frodo, ‘step or stone, breath or bone. Earth, air and water all

¹²¹ Mountains of Shadow.

seem accursed” (Tolkien, 2004: 711). What the hobbits who set foot inside the land of Mordor see during this journey is nothing compared to what they will see, for Mordor is darker inside than outside, surrounded by mountain ranges on both sides. Flames constantly gushing from Orodruin¹²² turned Mordor into a land of ash so that neither vegetation remained nor any living creature other than the Orcs and men who served Sauron. This darkness and shadow are so great and powerful that Frodo thinks that even the Valar living in the far west cannot escape it. This despair of Frodo is actually just what Sauron aims for. By covering the entire Middle-earth with darkness, he tries to bring despair into the hearts of the living and make everyone fear him because of this despair. Nevertheless, again, through Frodo and Sam’s eyes, Tolkien shows us that there is still hope in this darkness:

Upon its outer margs under the westward mountains *Mordor was a dying land, but it was not yet dead. And here things still grew, harsh, twisted, bitter, struggling for life.* In the glens of the Morgai on the other side of the valley 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. Flies, dun or grey, or black, marked like ores with a red eye-shaped blotch, buzzed and stung; and above the briar-thickets clouds of hungry midges danced and reeled (Tolkien, 2004: 921).

The examples of the struggle of “low scrubby trees,” “grass-tussocks,” “mosses,” and “brambles” to hold on to live in this place, which has turned into a whole land of ash, lies in Tolkien’s understanding of “a better future.” In this understanding, the entire world population (living and non-living beings) must act together and strive to eliminate the shadow. Just after that, the “white star” Sam sees in the sky is a symbol of this hope:

There, peeping among the cloud-wrack above a dark tor high up in the mountains, 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. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach (Tolkien, 2004: 922).

¹²² Mountain of Fire.

The last sentence of this quotation is the embodiment of the idea Tolkien wants to express. Middle-earth has been drowned in darkness and shadow many times in history, but it has lost its influence over time, thanks to those who oppose it each time. This shadow, which grows at the beginning of each age, has also been defeated in the end. The Third Age will experience exactly that. Therefore, this shadow inhabited by the Third Age is also temporary.

Nevertheless, of course, the traces will not be easily erased. Climbing Mount Doom, the last stage of the journey is the most difficult as in any quest. Now the power of the Ring grows more heavily than a hobbit body can bear; and worst of all, Frodo loses consciousness:

‘Do you remember that bit of rabbit, Mr. Frodo?’ he [Sam] said. ‘And our place under the warm bank in Captain Faramir’s country, the day I saw an oliphaunt?’ ‘No, I am afraid not, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘At least, I know that such things happened, but I cannot see them. No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark Sam, and there is no veil between me and the wheel of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades.’ (Tolkien, 2004: 937-8).

The fading of Frodo’s memories in his consciousness and his feeling completely “naked” and unprotected in the face of the enemy may be the worst experience a hobbit (not just a hobbit, but any living creature) can have. As the air is poisonous¹²³ and crushed under the shadow of this land, Frodo completely loses his decision-making authority and decides that the Ring belongs to him: “‘I have come,’ he said. ‘But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!’” (Tolkien, 2004: 945). This dominance of the Ring on its bearer will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. I want to draw attention here to show that a body and mind are equally affected by this situation in a place where there is toxic air, and ecological balance is disturbed. In such a place where bio-balance is broken and environmental destruction is made, an individual is affected both physically and mentally.

The issues studied so far show very well how the ecological balances in Middle-earth are on a thin thread. The revivification of Smaug’s barren land to fertile land, the restoration of the Shire’s sheltered fields, gardens, and lands after being taken over by

¹²³ “Worst of all, the air was full of fumes; breathing was painful and difficult, and a dizziness came on them, so that they staggered and often fell” (Tolkien, 2004: 940).

evil, the Elves' time for leaving their beloved Middle-earth (but one of Galadriel's famous Mallorn trees is now in the Shire), Isengard's restoration by the Ents, the reunification of the Northern and Southern kingdoms under Aragorn who claims the kingdom with the White Tree, Ithilien again being the garden of Gondor with Faramir are examples of the reactivity of the ecological balance. From this point of view, it can be said that Tolkien's vision of the environment is based on a religious basis; and the circumstances that emerge when working in harmony with this vision, and the condition of how life will look when this vision is rejected is clearly revealed (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: xvi-xvii). At one end of this vision created by Ilúvatar are environmental factors, while there is a cosmic formation at the other end. Furthermore, the representations of these two extremes have acted towards the preservation or deterioration of the ecological balance for ages and have been part of this vision. However, the admirable side is always made up of living/non-living beings who maintain the ecological balance, harbour the biosphere's energy, and maintain the spirit of trees and plants - and vegetation in general. "Why, in Tolkien's mythology, is self-denial better than exploitation and tyranny? Why is it better to love the earth and seek to preserve it rather than to ignore or despise it and use it destructively?" (24) ask Dickerson and Evans (2006), and they answer in categories:

1. The universe is the work of a divine creator.
2. The created world is good; it has inherent worth and beauty.
3. Creation has a purpose: to bring pleasure to its creator and to those who dwell in it.
4. The created order and its inhabitants are vulnerable to evil embodied in a cosmic enemy.
5. The mission of people dwelling in the world is to acknowledge the goodness of the earth, fulfill its purpose, and assist in its restoration from evil (24).

Looking at the answers of Dickerson and Evans one by one, it can be said that the good side (that is, environmentally conscious) fulfils most of these items. First of all, it is known that Ilúvatar created this universe on goodness. It is also seen that the Valar, in particular, are aware of this goodness and aim to preserve this beauty. Most Elves have the same instinct of protection as they learned from the Valar. The relentless struggle against Melkor/Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman covers the remarkable events of history for almost ages, especially the destruction by Melkor/Morgoth of many beauties created and organized by the Valar, is also an indication that this order can be corrupted by

evil.¹²⁴ Melkor's equality of divine power with Manwë makes him the cosmic enemy of Arda. It is in line with the purpose (preservation of order and beauty) that the Valar sends the Istari to Middle-earth to prepare for the great war against Sauron.

¹²⁴ However, it should be emphasized that what all evil deeds done by Melkor/Morgoth make life worth living and the world more wonderful and marvellous. The evil is the part of the whole and tributary to universe's glory in the end (Tolkien, 2015: 55).

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS ANALYSES OF TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH

Religion as the umbrella term mentioned in the Introduction and discussed theoretically in the First Chapter will be studied in Tolkien's legendarium from the mythological perspective. The phenomenon called mythology is very comprehensive, and it is true that it still has an arguable side. Mythology, which consists of systems created by people living in ancient times trying to make sense of what was happening around them, can process in the same way even in different geographical parts of the world. People living in those times were not indifferent to natural events and tried to attribute a meaning to each of them. Within the framework of this meaning, they took out a message from the parts of each natural phenomenon that bound them, and shaped their lives according to it. These lifestyles, which brought a set of rules and orders, pushed human communities to discover the secrets of the cosmos even more and interact with all kinds of living and non-living beings in nature. They were afraid of nature, had great respect for it, and formed their religious beliefs accordingly. This fear and respect for nature caused them to see it as a manifestation of the gods and to use it to shape the gods, as it revealed that they were subordinate to what was superior to them. Although the stories they told in this direction are read as fiction today, they reflect the perception of nature and religion of that time. Likewise, what happens to each of the characters or the pattern of the events in Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus can be read from this angle. This dissertation aims to question the place of nature in this religious cosmos. In this context, the way the inhabitants in this universe perceive nature and its meanings will be discussed in this ongoing cosmogony. The inhabitants of this universe, who are a part of the whole formed by this mysterious and magnificent cosmos, establish their beliefs centred on nature. Defining such a central approach as "older kind," Curry (2004) attributes the transition of human communities to anthropocentric beliefs to agriculture (235). In addition to this, Curry (2004) argues that in Middle-earth mythology, examples of both nature-centred and anthropomorphic structures are encountered as such:

The Valar, for example, are plainly gods, or ‘powers’ in human form; whereas the Ents are *not* people in tree-form, but trees that speak and walk – that is their very point, and wonder – while the Drúedain, whom Théoden and Merry encounter on the way to Minas Tirith, are the indigenous Paleolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers themselves. Tolkien’s Elves are balanced on the very fulcrum of this shift, humanoid but chthonic: of the Earth, and even if killed, returning to it eventually through reincarnation (235-6; emphasis in original).

In Curry’s view, in this anthropomorphic, nature-centred, and chthonic universe, it is inevitable for the perception of nature to be shaped accordingly. From this point of view, Tolkien’s mythology is unique in terms of religion. For this reason, as Wood (2003) says, “Tolkien is creating a mythical rather than a historical world” (14). These multiple belief systems make paganism deeply felt in Tolkien’s mythology because “pagans tend overwhelmingly to be polytheists, animists, pantheists, even agnostics or atheists.” The most prominent issue in paganism is the “collective spirituality,” rather than a religion bound by written rules. Also, the fact that events take place in pre-modern times is something that heightens this feeling. Instead of behaviours that must be kept within the drawn boundaries, paganism is “a love of and concern for the Earth and all its life-forms (not just the human).” In this context, there is a deep connection between paganism and ecology, and this link is spiritual and holistic. To “see a spirit in all things” (Curry, 2004: 206-7) is at the core of paganism, as in Tolkien’s mythology. By identifying the religious substructure with nature, Tolkien enables some characters in this legendarium to see nature as a divine power and respect it. Therefore, as proposed in the thesis of this dissertation, the religious system is based on widely natural forces and elements of the universe, mainly embodied by divine beings.

Nevertheless, here I will not discuss only the power fields of these divine beings or the events involving them. At the same time, the (living/non-living) inhabitants of this world who are somehow in contact with these divine powers or the positions of evils in this cosmogony also encompass the wide-ranging focus of this chapter. However, it will be helpful to take a detailed look at the creation myth of this universe to establish this focus.

3.1. Creation Myth

The whole creation myth in Tolkien’s mythology is narrated in *The Silmarillion*, which was posthumously published by Tolkien’s son Christopher Tolkien in 1977. The

book, which begins with the creation of the universe called Eä, including Middle-earth, is a guide for understanding on which religious formations Tolkien based this mythology. As stated in the section called “Ainulindalë,” “[t]here was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar” (Tolkien, 1999: 3). Eru created the Ainur, “the Holy Ones, that were with him before aught else was made” (Tolkien, 1999: 3).¹²⁵ After the Ainur, the creation of the universe¹²⁶ began, which was made with musical themes, revealing that the creation begins with a verbal action rather than a physical one. The power of the words here turns into the power of the musical notes. Inside these themes,¹²⁷ Ilúvatar put all his design about the universe: the world and the coming of the Children of Ilúvatar and partly its end.

While some of these designs were revealed to the Ainur, some of them were kept as a secret by Ilúvatar. However, before embarking on these musical themes, Eru addresses the Ainur as follows: “Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony together a Great Music. And since I have kindled you with the Flame Imperishable, ye shall show forth your powers in adorning this theme, each with his own thoughts and devices, if he will” (Tolkien, 1999: 3). Here the notion of “Flame Imperishable,” which Ilúvatar says to the Ainur, is mythologically important because “fire” is among the “primordial images,” and “it is universally disseminated” (Eliade, 1978: 209). The transmission of the fire to the Ainur and its circulation through the Ainur – for they shaped Arda - can be read as a sign that this cosmogonic fire will give energy to all living and non-living beings in the universe because this is a “divine flame” which associates with “spirit” and “seed” (Eliade, 1978: 315). In other words, the function of this “divine flame” in the creation of every living/non-living being is due to the fact that this flame, as a “luminous element,” bestows souls on living beings (Eliade, 1976: 115). Likewise, after Ilúvatar sent this “secret fire” to the Ainur’s

¹²⁵ Although there seems to be only one god in Tolkien’s mythology, the demi-gods or the Valar (Ulmo, Manwë, Varda, Aulë, Yavanna, Oromë, Vána, Mandos, Vairë, Lórien, Estë, Tulkas, Nessa, Nienna and Melkor) created by Ilúvatar constitute a polytheistic system in the *legendarium*, which surely makes it pagan. Tolkien attributes them as “the ‘gods’ of higher mythology” (Carpenter, 2006: 146). The reason of the transition from a monotheistic religion to a polytheistic religion will be explained later.

¹²⁶ The purpose of the creation of this universe is completely unique. Eru, with the help of the Ainur, created the universe just for beauty and goodness. Dickerson and Evans (2006) explain the purpose of the creation of this universe as follows: “Eru has a purpose for all of creation: it is for delight and for beauty, to be enjoyed for its own sake, not for hoarding or destruction or for the mastery that can be accomplished through its possession, use, or domination” (29).

¹²⁷ The number of the themes are three. The first theme began within a harmony but Melkor put a discord in it. Later, Eru stopped it and started a second one. This theme was more beautiful than the first one; however, Melkor’s discord was more violent this time. Eru started a third one and this theme looked unlike the others. But again, the theme did not last long and Eru stopped it.

thoughts (Tolkien, 1999: 4), it proves that this fire is the energy source of the created universe by Ilúvatar's own words: "And I will send forth into the Void the Flame Imperishable, and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be" (Tolkien, 1999: 9). Thus, the Void is filled with the music of Ilúvatar and the Ainur; as a result, "it was not void" (Tolkien, 1999: 4) anymore.¹²⁸

This universe, which was created with a musical theme, will end with a musical theme in the same way when the time comes: "[I]t has been said that a greater still shall be made before Ilúvatar by the choirs of the Ainur and the Children of Ilúvatar after the end of days" (Tolkien, 1999: 4). In this ending music, the Children of Ilúvatar will be included in the choir, although it is hidden from both the Ainur and the Elves when it is going to take place. However, Wood (2003) suggests that "[a] pagan sense of Doom—the notion that the world's outcome is unalterably bent toward final destruction—resounds like a dread drumbeat throughout *The Lord of the Rings*" (15). Wood's "pagan sense of doom" refers to the ancient German religion, which "was dominated by intense interest in the myth of the end of the world" (Eliade, 1984: 155). Although *The Lord of the Rings* closes with the end of the Third Age and there are references to the Fourth Age in Middle-earth, the inevitable end can be sensible even from the book's last words or the characters' utterances in the book. Besides, like in the ancient German religion in which "*the end of the world is already announced in the cosmogony*" (Eliade, 1984: 155; emphasis in original), the ending of Eä is possible to be hidden in the creation of it. Coming of the Children of Ilúvatar is also one of the mysterious topics in this creation myth because it was hidden in the third theme in which the Ainur had no part. The only thing that the Ainur knew about the Elves (The First-born) and the Men (Followers) was shown to them in a vision by Ilúvatar, which made their hearts and minds suspicious and curious about it. Especially Melkor went further in that matter by seeking to "subdue to his will both Elves and Men [...] and he wished himself to have subjects and servants, and to be called Lord, and to be a master over other wills" (Tolkien, 1999: 7-8). The only thing necessary to achieve this was to enter this universe created by the Music and conquer the world from within, which Melkor did. In this creation myth, where the vision came true, some of the Ainur, like Melkor, wanted to enter this universe and shape the world from within. Although none of their purposes were

¹²⁸ In *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, this Secret Fire is mentioned to give "Life and Reality" (Tolkien, 2015: 53). Melkor is narrated to search for it; however he cannot find it because it is within Ilúvatar. If the Secret Fire is the Ilúvatar, then it is also the Green God.

malevolent like Melkor, a group of Ainur¹²⁹ who would enter the universe of Eä and begin to live in Arda formed the pantheon of this universe.¹³⁰

Now the Valar took to themselves shape and hue; and because they were drawn into the World by love of the Children of Ilúvatar, for whom they hoped, they took shape after that manner which they had beheld in the Vision of Ilúvatar, save only in majesty and splendour. Moreover their shape comes of their knowledge of the visible World, rather than of the World itself; and they need it not, save only as we use raiment, and yet we may be naked and suffer no loss of our being. Therefore the Valar may walk, if they will, unclad, and then even the Eldar cannot clearly perceive them, though they be present. But when they desire to clothe themselves the Valar take upon them forms some as of male and some as of female; for that difference of temper they had even from their beginning, and it is but bodied forth in the choice of each, not made by the choice, even as with us male and female may be shown by the raiment but is not made thereby. But the shapes wherein the Great Ones array themselves are not at all times like to the shapes of the kings and queens of the Children of Ilúvatar; for at times they may clothe themselves in their own thought, made visible in forms of majesty and dread (Tolkien, 1999: 11).

As can be seen in this long but noteworthy quotation, these powers that “descended” on Arda put themselves in shape, and in doing so, they tried to resemble the Children of Ilúvatar. Here, it is sure to talk about an anthropomorphic structure quoted and mentioned above from Curry. This structure reveals that Anthropos desires to make every other being resemble himself, although deities taking the shape of the human form are widespread among the mythologies. However, the difference in this creation myth is that the Valar took the shape of the Elves form, not the Men of this universe. In addition, they do not need any shape. The reason here is for the love the Valar feels for the Children of Ilúvatar. Apart from taking shapes, they also took on gender roles. This issue will be examined in another subheading related to the Valar. The last thing to be said about this issue is that the shape that Melkor took confirms his purpose in the first place: “[H]e also took visible form, but because of his mood and the malice that burned in him that form was dark and terrible” (Tolkien, 1999: 11).

¹²⁹ Henceforth, they will be called the Valar.

¹³⁰ That is why the above mentioned transition is achieved. These “powers” transiting into the universe are now the gods of it.

Back to the creation myth, the first dwelling-place of the Valar entering Arda was Middle-earth. Located in the Isle of Almaren, the Valar started to give Arda the shape Ilúvatar had shown them in the vision. Based on the narratives in *The Silmarillion*, it is estimated that Arda was not round in shape but composed of a flat land (Figure 1) (Fonstad, 1991: ix).

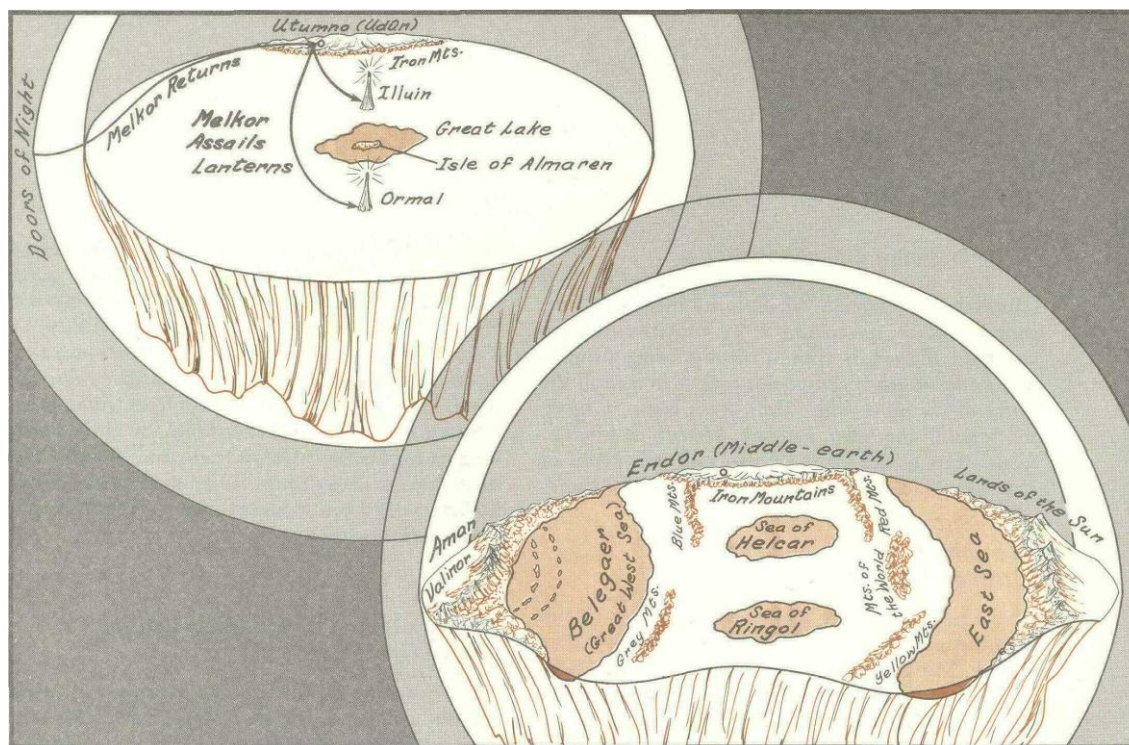


Figure 1 Spring of Arda (Fonstad, 1991: 2).

Located in the middle of this flat land, the Valar asked Aulë to design two lamps to illuminate Middle-earth:

Aulë at the prayer of Yavanna wrought two mighty lamps for the lighting of the Middle-earth which he had built amid the encircling seas. Then Varda filled the lamps and Manwë hallowed them, and the Valar set them upon high pillars, more lofty far than are any mountains of the later days. One lamp they raised near to the north of Middle-earth, and it was named Illuin;¹³¹ and the other was raised in the south, and it was named Ormal;¹³² and the light of the Lamps of the Valar flowed out over the Earth, so that all was lit as it were in a changeless day (Tolkien, 1999: 27).

¹³¹ Polaris; North Star; Pole Star.

¹³² Polaris Australis; South Star.

The first thing that draws attention here is that in this universe, which continues to be shaped after the creation, a Solar system in which a Sun that will heat and illuminate the universe had not been formed from the very beginning. Although the Sun was not yet created, these two lamps representing it fulfilled the need of the Valar. As each Valar strove to shape Arda in his/her field of power, Melkor did not stand still and built his first stronghold in Utumno¹³³ - as it can be seen in Figure 1 - after he came back to Arda. After the return of Melkor, “[g]reen things fell sick and rotted, and rivers were choked with weeds and slime, and fens were made, rank and poisonous, the breeding place of flies; and forests grew dark and perilous, the haunts of fear; and beasts became monsters of horn and ivory and dyed the earth with blood” (Tolkien, 1999: 29).

The things that the Valar had created until that time started to rot upon the coming of Melkor because Melkor planned to have the governance of Arda under a shadow rather than bliss. The plants and trees became dark and wicked; the waters running through the earth became poisonous; some kind of monsters and beasts appeared under the darkness of the nights. While Melkor’s existence was enough for the earth to vomit the filth of his plans, he took his next step further to broke the lamps of the Valar: “In the overthrow of the mighty pillars lands were broken and seas arose in tumult; and when the lamps were spilled destroying flame was poured out over the Earth. And the shape of Arda and the symmetry of its waters and its lands was marred in that time, so that the first designs of the Valar were never after restored” (Tolkien, 1999: 29). The breaking of the lamps had a geographical effect on the shaping of Arda because some lands were broken, and some pillars emerged while the waters changed their flowing courses through the lands.¹³⁴ Breaking of the lamps was a disappointment for the Valar regarding their devotion to shaping the world for the Children of Ilúvatar. As stated in the quotation, the first designs of the Valar would never be replaced from that time on.

While Melkor fled to Utumno to protect himself from the wrath of the Valar, the Valar left Middle-earth and went to the Land of Aman (Valinor).¹³⁵ The Land of Aman would be the land of the gods from that time on, and it “was blessed, for the Deathless dwelt there, and there naught faded nor withered, neither was there any stain upon

¹³³ Before that, First War occurred between the Valar and Melkor. It was a kind of war of gods in order to have the domination of Arda. When Tulkas entered Arda to fight Melkor, Melkor escaped and there was peace for a long age.

¹³⁴ The new shape of Arda can be seen in the lower right, in Figure 1.

¹³⁵ “[T]he westernmost of all lands upon the borders of the world; for its west shores looked upon the Outer Sea” (Tolkien, 1999: 30).

flower or leaf in that land, nor any corruption or sickness in anything that lived; for the very stones and waters were hallowed” (Tolkien, 1999: 30). The most important cosmological creation in Aman was the Two Trees of Valinor, which were made with the song of Yavanna and the tears of Nienna, as discussed in Chapter Two. These cosmic Trees were the reflection of the Flame Imperishable of Ilúvatar upon Arda. Both the ecological and cosmological dimensions of these Trees were discussed, so it would be better not to repeat it here. However, to remember, it should be declared that these Two Trees started the counting of the days and nights, which officially marks the beginning of the history of Arda.

When the coming of the Elves was near, the Valar continued their designs for their inhabitation in Arda. In order for this, Varda made new stars¹³⁶, as underlined in the quotation below:

¹³⁶ Christopher Tolkien (2015) in *Morgoth's Ring* (Volume X of *The History of Middle-earth*) notes the fact that his father wrote some letters above the names of these stars, which may refer to the fact that some of these stars could be the planets we know today (435).

Then Varda went forth from the council, and she looked out from the height of Taniquetil, and beheld the darkness of Middle-earth beneath the innumerable stars, faint and far. Then she began a great labour, greatest of all the works of the Valar since their coming into Arda. She took the silver dew from the vats of Telperion, and therewith she made new stars and brighter against the coming of the Firstborn; wherefore she whose name out of the deeps of time and the labours of Eä was Tintallë, the Kindler, was called after by the Elves Elentári, Queen of the Stars. Carnil¹³⁷ and Luinil, Nénar¹³⁸ and Lumbar,¹³⁹ Alcarinquë¹⁴⁰ and Elemmíre¹⁴¹ she wrought in that time, and many other of the ancient stars she gathered together and set as signs in the heavens of Arda: Wilwarin,¹⁴² Telumendil,¹⁴³ Soronúmë,¹⁴⁴ and Anarríma;¹⁴⁵ and Menelmacar¹⁴⁶ with his shining belt, that forebodes the Last Battle that shall be at the end of days. And high in the north as a challenge to Melkor she set the crown of seven mighty stars to swing, Valacirca,¹⁴⁷ the Sickle of the Valar and sign of doom (Tolkien, 1999: 44-5).

¹³⁷ “[A] great red star named *Karnil* and marked with ‘M’ must be Mars” (Tolkien, 2015:435).

¹³⁸ “[T]he authors concluded that my father originally intended *Némar* (‘N’) for the planet Neptune, but transferred the identification to *Luinil*, *Némar* thus becoming Uranus” (Tolkien, 2015:435).

¹³⁹ “[T]he identification of *Lumbar* (‘S’) with Saturn” (Tolkien, 2015:435).

¹⁴⁰ “*Alcarinque* is Jupiter” (Tolkien, 2015:435).

¹⁴¹ “*Elemmire* (‘M’) with Mercury” (Tolkien, 2015:435).

¹⁴² “The name *Wilwarin* means ‘butterfly’, though it isn’t clear which of today’s constellations corresponded to this ancient star-pattern. Christopher Tolkien suggests that Cassiopeia might be a candidate for the star-butterfly, and indeed its ‘W’ shape seems a reasonable match for the name” (<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/w/wilwarin.html>)

¹⁴³ “Its name apparently contains the word *telume*, referring to the dome of the sky, so *Telumendil* means ‘friend of the dome of the heavens’. It is not known for sure which modern constellation corresponds to *Telumendil*. The similarity of the name to *Telumehtar*, a name for Orion, is misleading: we can be sure that *Telumendil* was definitely a distinct pattern of stars. In *The Silmarillion*, it’s named between *Wilwarin* (modern Cassiopeia) and *Soronúmë* (probably Aquila, the Eagle). If this order corresponds to the appearance of the constellations in the sky (which is far from certain) then *Telumendil* would probably correspond to Cygnus the Swan, perhaps viewed as a figure with outstretched arms, as an explanation for the name ‘friend of the dome of the heavens’” (<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/t/telumendil.html>)

¹⁴⁴ “Its name, which seems to mean ‘eagle of the west’ suggests a connection with the stars we know today as Aquila, but this is not certain” (<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/s/soronume.html>).

¹⁴⁵ “It has not been certainly identified, but its name apparently means ‘Sun-edge’ or ‘Sun-border’, so it perhaps lies to the side of the Ecliptic, the Sun’s path through the sky” (<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/a/anarrima.html>).

¹⁴⁶ “A Quenya name for the constellation known today as Orion. *Menelmacar* superseded the older form, *Telumehtar* (which nonetheless continued in use), and was itself adopted into Sindarin as *Menelvagor*. The bright red star that formed *Menelmacar*’s left shoulder - today called *Betelgeuse* - was known in Elvish as *Borgil*. *Menelmacar* was one of the brilliant constellations placed in the sky by Varda to bring light to the World in defiance of Melkor. These stars were profoundly significant in Elvish legend: it was said that when *Menelmacar* first rose in the sky, the first Elves had awoken at *Cuiviénen*. What’s more, the swordsman was said to be a sign of the Last Battle foretold by Mandos, and was even said to represent *Túrin Turambar*, who was prophesied to return and join the final war against Melkor” (<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/m/menelmacar.html>).

¹⁴⁷ “As the time of the awakening of the Elves approached, Varda the Queen of the Stars ordered the heavens to create signs and symbols. One of the most prominent of these signs was a group of seven bright stars that formed the shape of a great sickle in the northern sky. This was *Valacirca*, the Sickle of the Valar, that swung through the sky as a challenge and a threat to the Dark Lord Melkor. Among the peoples of Middle-earth, *Valacirca* would be given other names: the Elves also called it simply the ‘Seven

Upon the creation of these stars, the Elves awoke at Cuiviénen, “an eastern bay of the Inland Sea of Helcar, formed by the meltwaters of the pillar of Illuin” (Fonstad, 1991: 1). Since the first they saw when they awoke were the stars created by Varda to illuminate Middle-earth, they are called Eldar,¹⁴⁸ and “they have ever loved the starlight, and have revered Varda Elentári above all the Valar” (Tolkien, 1999: 45). When they first awoke, there was nobody around to guide them; therefore, they started “to give names to all things that they perceived” (Tolkien, 1999: 45). Naming is an essential issue in creation myths. The reasons for the Eldar’s existence in this mythology are directly proportional to the names they give to each of the beings around them and the gods they will know later. This also indirectly explains why, in this cosmogony, each god or being has more than one name. As Eliade (1978) says, “the divinity is *at the same time* one and multiple; the creation consists in the multiplication of his names and forms” (110; emphasis in original). So, for example, Varda’s name in Middle-earth is “Elbereth,” meaning “Star-queen” in Sindarin tongue (Tyler, 2014: n.p.).

It was Melkor who found the Eldar before the Valar. He captured some of them, locked them in dungeons, and bred the Orc race. Among the Valar, Oromë was the first to see the Eldar. When Oromë informed the Valar that Melkor was holding some Elves captive, the Valar took council and planned to attack Melkor. Thus, the Great Battle of the Powers started as follows:

Stars’, and among Men and Hobbits it was known as the ‘Wain’ or wagon. In modern times we call it the ‘Plough’ or ‘Big Dipper’, part of the constellation of the Great Bear, and it still swings around the Pole Star in the skies of the North” (<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/v/valacirca.html>).

¹⁴⁸ The people of the Stars.

Melkor met the onset of the Valar in the North-west of Middle-earth, and all that region was much broken. But the first victory of the hosts of the West was swift, and the servants of Melkor fled before them to Utumno. Then the Valar passed over Middle-earth, and they set a guard over Cuiviénen; and thereafter the Quendi¹⁴⁹ knew nothing of the great Battle of the Powers, save that the Earth shook and groaned beneath them, and the waters were moved, and in the north there were lights as of mighty fires. Long and grievous was the siege of Utumno, and many battles were fought before its gates of which naught but the rumour is known to the Elves. *In that time the shape of Middle-earth was changed, and the Great Sea that sundered it from Aman grew wide and deep; and it broke in upon the coasts and made a deep gulf to the southward. Many lesser bays were made between the Great Gulf and Helcaraxë far in the north, where Middle-earth and Aman came nigh together. Of these the Bay of Balar was the chief; and into it the mighty river Sirion flowed down from the new-raised highlands northwards: Dorthonion, and the mountains about Hithlum.* The lands of the far north were all made desolate in those days; for there Utumno was delved exceeding deep, and its pits were filled with fires and with great hosts of the servants of Melkor” (Tolkien, 1999: 48).¹⁵⁰

As this long but extensive quotation shows, the Valar waged war against Melkor, and besieged Utumno. At the end of this war, in which many battles were fought, the shape of Middle-earth changed once again, and new coasts, gulfs, bays, and rivers were formed. At the end of this war that resulted in the captivity of Melkor, Melkor was kept in the Halls of Mandos. Meanwhile, the Eldar was summoned to Aman by the Valar. Thus, the Great March of the Elves began.

Back to the creation, it is seen that the creation of Men in Tolkien’s cosmogony was the last one because Men are called Followers. However, it may be inappropriate to say that their coming was the climax of the cosmological order. Tolkien always insists in his letters that his ultimate story is not about the Men at all. It seems possible that Eä was not created for the dignity of Men, although Men in Tolkien’s legendarium are believed to be inclined to have domination over Middle-earth. They are believed to be significantly influenced by Melkor in terms of dominating the world and “are largely busy in destroying it” (Tolkien, 2015: 342). It may be unfair to say that only the Men or

¹⁴⁹ The name of the Eldar by the Valar.

¹⁵⁰ The building of Utumno and the reckless digging of the depths by Melkor’s servants can be compared to the construction of the Pandemonium mentioned in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and its location as the epicentre of Satan.

all men were corrupted in this mythology. There are many faithful ones among the Men who have fought Melkor/Morgoth or Sauron (a fallen Maia¹⁵¹) in Middle-earth.

After Melkor had been captivated by the Valar, exiled from the world, and sent back to the Void, Sauron became the Dark Lord of Middle-earth and sustained the legacy of Melkor/Morgoth. However, their evil deeds will be discussed in a detailed way under the subheading of “Evil.” Men awoke “in the land of Hildórien in the eastward regions of Middle-earth” (Tolkien, 1999: 115) and “have feared the Valar, rather than loved them, and have not understood the purposes of the Powers, being at variance with them, and at strife with the world” (Tolkien, 1999: 116).

Among the Valar, the god who most interacted with Men was Ulmo, and “his messages came often to them by stream and flood” (Tolkien, 1999: 116). But in Men, the ability to understand these messages was not as advanced as in the Elves; that is why the influence of Melkor more than the Valar was felt on them. The Elves did not sufficiently understand the purposes and roles of Men in Arda. For example, where Men go after death is also a question mark for the Elves: “What may befall their spirits after death the Elves know not. Some say that they too go to the halls of Mandos; but their place of waiting there is not that of the Elves, and Mandos under Ilúvatar alone save Manwë knows whither they go after the time of recollection in those silent halls beside the Outer Sea” (Tolkien, 1999: 117).

However, the creation of the Sun and Moon just before the awakening of the Men and the beginning of the First Age in this way can be considered a sign that this creation myth is long-lasting. Thus, another critical issue in Tolkien’s creation myth is the Sun and the Moon and the beginning of Time. Time measurement did not exist in Arda before the Sun and Moon were created.¹⁵² This “timelessness” is a situation encountered in world mythologies. For example, Eliade (1961) states that the Upanishads also believed in the principle of time and timelessness, and he quotes from Maitri Upanishad as such: “What precedes the Sun is timeless (akāla) and undivided (akala); but what begins with the Sun is Time that has divisions (sakala), and its form is the Year” (74). Eliade explains that the expression “what precedes the Sun” refers to the period before creation. Eliade (1961), who uses the term “Cosmic Nights” to the mahāyuga or kalpa interval in the understanding of Brahman, says that there is no

¹⁵¹ Lesser beings coming after the Valar. Having a physical form, some of them inhabited in Middle-earth. Among them there were Saruman and Gandalf.

¹⁵² It is sure that with Telperion and Laurelin, the formation of days and nights had occurred, but the concept of time emerged with the Sun and the Moon.

duration in these intervals. In cosmic understanding, the Sun, equated with time, forms the rhythm of the great cosmic time with the Moon (74). Eliade (1963), quoting Martha Warner Beckwith, who wrote a book on the creation hymn belonging to a Hawaiian royal family, sees Beckwith talking about how the sunrise in the Polynesian religion was likened to human birth. Wakea, the world of the sky, rises from the womb of the waters where the night bursts into darkness, “so the child bursts the sheath where it lay within its mother’s womb and emerges into the light” (23). In Tolkien’s mythology, the birth of the Men happens with the creation of the Sun and the beginning of time: “At the first rising of the Sun the Younger Children of Ilúvatar awoke” (Tolkien, 1999: 115). Besides, as quoted from Eliade above (Cosmic Nights), before the creation of the Sun in Arda, there was a period called the Darkening of Valinor.

Another matter that has to be mentioned here is the organization of Tolkien’s creation myth. Leslie Donovan (2014) draws attention in her article to Tolkien’s hierarchical order in the creation by saying as follows:

[M]ost world mythologies are further organized according to clearly defined hierarchies, and the structure of Tolkien’s mythology is no different. Tolkien constructs his world along a vertical configuration highly reminiscent of the Great Chain of Being [...] While it is debatable whether Elves and Men are placed together on the same level in Tolkien’s order, it is clear that the Dwarves, beings created by Aulë, are considered lower on the chain than both Elves and Men. Such rankings imply a moral hierarchy organized according to a being’s closeness in nature and spirit to Ilúvatar (96-7).

As the quotation suggests,¹⁵³ the Ainur or the Valar are at the top in the ranking because they are, in a way, representatives of Ilúvatar upon the Earth. Each of them has their area of power, and they helped Ilúvatar make Arda have taken shape. They are the only ones who saw and communicated with Ilúvatar and were assigned as the governors in Arda.

¹⁵³ The hierarchical order here does not imply that the races or living/non-living beings that will be at the bottom of the pyramid are going to be “marginalized” or “humiliated” compared to the races above the pyramid. The hierarchical order mentioned here is cosmogonic and all about religion. The beings that are likely to be placed at the bottom of the pyramid have as much environmental awareness as those at the top. From this point of view, all the beings of this universe depend on each other for the sake of the creation. Apart from this, I would likely to express that I do not agree with Donovan’s resemblance of Tolkien’s cosmological order to the Great Chain of Being.

It is only Ilúvatar who had created at first in Tolkien's mythology as it was stated before. However, Aulë, the Maker of Middle-earth and concerned with substances such as rock and metal, could not refrain from making a race, namely the Dwarves, although it was not a part of Ilúvatar's design. After the Valar had learned that the Children of Ilúvatar would be inhabitants of Arda, they were curious about why, how, and when they would come. Except for this little information, they had not known how they would look like and whether they would be in the same status with the Valar. Aulë had sought to exceed it and made a race associated with rock and metals like himself. He thought that the Children of Ilúvatar would look like the one that he had made. Nevertheless, Ilúvatar saw what Aulë had done and warned him that only he should design the creation, adding that because of the power that Ilúvatar had assigned to him, he had managed to make this race. Nevertheless, the Dwarves could not live in Arda up to the time of the coming of the Children because the design had not been defined in that way. Up to that time, the Dwarves of Aulë had been put to sleep by Ilúvatar. After the Children had awakened up, the Dwarves started to breathe and become inhabitants of Arda. As a matter of fact, the Dwarves were put in the chain beneath the Elves and Men.

The last point that has to be discussed about the quotation is that the Elves, rather than the Men, seem to be more inclined to accept the existence of Ilúvatar because they have been also accepted to be inhabitants of Aman as stated above.¹⁵⁴ For a time, both the Valar and the first Elves lived in harmony in the Undying Lands, so the Elves found a chance to get close with some of the members of the Valar. It is also because it was the Valar that taught many things to the first fathers of the Elves. It stands for sure that they must have also infused the faith in Ilúvatar to the Elves, or the Elves must have witnessed the communication between the Valar and Ilúvatar. In this way or in that way, after some Elves moved to Middle-earth¹⁵⁵ and started to live there, they still have the faith of Ilúvatar. For this reason, most of them fight against Melkor/Morgoth in Middle-earth.

¹⁵⁴ The summoning of the Elves to Aman.

¹⁵⁵ Stanton (2001) explains why Tolkien named this continent inhabited by the Elves, Men, Dwarves, Hobbits, and many other living and non-living beings as Middle-earth: "'Middle-earth' ('middan-geard') was the name for the Earth itself, imagined as suspended between the sky above and the void below, or as poised spiritually between Heaven and Hell" (12). Eliade (1961) speaks of "centre" symbolism, and in beliefs that have three cosmic regions - Heaven, Earth, and Hell - the centre of the world is at the intersection of these regions: "It is here that the break-through on to another plane is possible and, at the same time, communication between the three regions" (40).

When compared to the Elves, most of the Men seem to have forgotten the name Ilúvatar. Among them, there are some exceptions that have the faith, but the Fall of Men sounds more familiar in Tolkien's mythology. Unlike the Elves, the Men could not enter and live in Aman. Their only dwelling place is Middle-earth, and it is always under the dark clouds of either Melkor/Morgoth or Sauron. In this moral hierarchy that Donovan mentions, the Elves heard about Ilúvatar from the Valar, and the Men heard about the Valar from the Elves. Because of this organization, Men seem to have been further away from Ilúvatar than the Elves did. It is apparent also from the conversation between Finrod (a High Elf) and Andreth (Men, Wise-woman). The main point of their conversation or discussion is about the immortality of the Elves and the mortality of the Men. This matter is going to be discussed in a detailed way under the subheading of "Question of (Im)mortality" but what Andreth thinks and says about the Valar tells the reader much about Men's distance to Ilúvatar in Tolkien's mythology as follows: "'The Valar?'" she said. 'How should I know, or any Man? Your Valar do not trouble us either with care or with instruction. They sent no summons to us'" (Tolkien, 2015: 313).

As explicit in the quotation, Andreth confirms that the Valar and the Men do not have any relationship like the Elves and the Valar have, let alone Ilúvatar. Before she says this, she also mentions Eru not by her knowledge but by another folk of the Men. She says that the people of Marach had had once the knowledge of Eru, although in her folk, "He was almost forgotten" (Tolkien, 2015: 309). The difference between the distances of the Elves and the Men to Ilúvatar may result in these two very akin races have diverted approaches to Arda. The Elves seem always more protective towards Arda and its natural habitat, flora, and fauna.

Furthermore, the Elves think that the Men "have less and less *love* for Arda in itself" (Tolkien, 2015: 342; emphasis in original). It is essential to say that the Elves are not also wholly perfect, innocent, and faithful. After the defeat of Melkor/Morgoth,¹⁵⁶ his servant Sauron was summoned to Valinor to be judged by Manwë and his court. Notwithstanding, Sauron hid in the depths of Middle-earth and started to plan to conquer it. He was very sure that the Men would yield to his power; however, his most desire was to corrupt the hearts of the Elves because "he knew that the Firstborn had the greater power" (Tolkien, 1999: 343). He did not achieve it wholly, even though some of the Elves welcomed him and believed in his evil-plotted words. With the help coming

¹⁵⁶ After the Great Battle of the Powers.

from the Elves, Sauron managed to complete some of his plan, which was to rule Middle-earth as a god-like king and make all the races inhabiting Middle-earth his subjects. Especially in Eregion,¹⁵⁷ Sauron became a supervisor and guided in the making of the Rings of Power. The making of these Rings is a critical event in the history of Middle-earth as it is accounted in *The Silmarillion* such in the following:

Now the Elves made many rings; but secretly Sauron made One Ring to rule all the others, and their power was bound up with it, to be subject wholly to it and to last only so long as it too should last. And much of the strength and will of Sauron passed into that One Ring; for the power of the Elven-rings was very great, and that which should govern them must be a thing of surpassing potency; and Sauron forged it in the Mountain of Fire in the Land of Shadow. And while he wore the One Ring he could perceive all the things that were done by means of the lesser rings, and he could see and govern the very thoughts of those that wore them (Tolkien, 1999: 344).

As apparent in the quotation above, Sauron made a means for himself which was a massive step for him to be a one and only ruler. All these details given above are essential to understand the fact that although the Elves are either in the same with or higher position than the Men in the hierarchical order in Tolkien's mythology, they made some mistakes, some of which changed the history of Middle-earth, stayed even behind the distance that the Men were to Ilúvatar, and the last but not the least helped the enemy of Ilúvatar. It was easy for them to say that the Men had less love for Arda than they had, but the desire for power is a central theme repeatedly stressed in Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus and does not regard any chain or status. That Aulë's making of the Dwarves, mentioned above, the Elves' making the Rings of Power, and Men's liability to Sauron because of the absence of faith in them can be given as examples for this theme. Additionally, Wood (2003) emphasizes a significant fact about the Elves as such:

¹⁵⁷ A land of the Elves who are famous for their ability of arts and crafts.

It might seem that the elves, because they are immortal, would be sunny and endlessly cheerful creatures. It is not so. Part of their gloom derives from their early rejection of Ilúvatar's will that they live in Valinor. Yet they are somber creatures also because their bodies gradually fade over time. Their long lives enable them to know the entire course of history, from its beginning through its middle and now to the threatened end of Middle-earth (18).

In his letter to Milton Waldman,¹⁵⁸ Tolkien mentions that “[t]hey¹⁵⁹ wanted the peace and bliss and perfect memory of ‘The West’, and yet to remain on the ordinary earth¹⁶⁰ where their prestige as the highest people, above wild Elves, dwarves, and Men, was greater than at the bottom of the hierarchy of Valinor” (Carpenter, 2006: 151). From these quotations, it is understood that the Elves feel themselves both in exile and at home in Middle-earth due to their endless days and their longing for the West. This idea is also supported by Theodore Schick (2004) as such: “The elves that stayed – the Delaying Elves – decided that it was better to rule in Middle-earth than serve in Valinor. They longed for the West, however, and Sauron used this desire to gain their confidence and create the rings” (33).

Finally, the most important thing that strikes the eye in the religious dimension in Tolkien's creation myth is the phenomenon of “fate.” It is noticed that the word “chance” is often used instead of it. It is the pre-determination or knowledge of the occurrence of an event and is mentioned in the background of many important events in Middle-earth. The concept of “doom,” which comes with the phenomenon of fate, continues to affect the crucial characters of Middle-earth since the Elder Ages. The most important of these is the “Doom of the Noldor” which Mandos conveyed as Fëanor¹⁶¹ was leaving Valinor with the people of the Noldor in defiance of the judgment of Manwë and the other Valar:

¹⁵⁸ An editor at Collins.

¹⁵⁹ Exiled Elves who decided to stay in Middle-earth.

¹⁶⁰ Middle-earth.

¹⁶¹ The first son of Finwë, who was accepted as one of the ambassadors of the Elves to Aman. He found the earth-gems in Aman and started to give a form to them. Thus, he created the Silmarils.

[T]he Valar will fence Valinor against you, and shut you out, so that not even the echo of your lamentation shall pass over the mountains. On the House of Fëanor the wrath of the Valar lieth from the West unto the uttermost East, and upon all that will follow them it shall be laid also. Their Oath shall drive them, and yet betray them, and ever snatch away the very treasures that they have sworn to pursue. To evil end shall all things turn that they begin well; and by treason of kin unto kin, and the fear of treason, shall this come to pass. The Dispossessed shall they be for ever. ‘Ye have spilled the blood of your kindred unrighteously and have stained the land of Aman. For blood ye shall render blood, and beyond Aman ye shall dwell in Death’s shadow. For though Eru appointed to you to die not in Eä, and no sickness may assail you, yet slain ye may be, and slain ye shall be: by weapon and by torment and by grief; and your houseless spirits shall come then to Mandos. There long shall ye abide and yearn for your bodies, and find little pity though all whom ye have slain should entreat for you. And those that endure in Middle-earth and come not to Mandos shall grow weary of the world as with a great burden, and shall wane, and become as shadows of regret before the younger race that cometh after. The Valar have spoken’ (Tolkien, 1999: 94-5).

The people of the Noldor, who arrived in Middle-earth and settled in the Beleriand region, lived all the doom conveyed by Mandos. The Noldor, acting together at first, then dispersed to different parts of Beleriand, and most sons of Finwë lived in isolation with their people. The lands where peace and tranquillity were established before, then witness the massacres of siblings or cousins. In particular, Fëanor’s oath¹⁶² stayed on his children after he died, and crushed them. The catastrophes that came with this oath caused the death of most of the children of Finwë, the leaders of the Noldor people. It is also the beginning of many events that would change Middle-earth history. This situation shows us how a divine power in which the decisions of Middle-earth characters are influenced affects the events that changed the course of history.

This divine power is often read by the characters as “fate,” “chance,” or “doom.” For example, upon this doom, Ulmo warns Turgon¹⁶³ to build a secret city and leave a token behind because Fëanor’s oath would also affect him. Turgon, like the other

¹⁶² “Then Fëanor swore a terrible oath. His seven sons leapt straightway to his side and took the selfsame vow together, and red as blood shone their drawn swords in the glare of the torches. They swore an oath which none shall break, and none should take, by the name even of Ilúvatar, calling the Everlasting Dark upon them if they kept it not; and Manwë they named in witness, and Varda, and the hallowed mountain of Taniquetil, vowing to pursue with vengeance and hatred to the ends of the World Vala, Demon, Elf or Man as yet unborn, or any creature, great or small, good or evil, that time should bring forth unto the end of days, whoso should hold or take or keep a Silmaril from their possession” (Tolkien, 1999: 88-9).

¹⁶³ Son of Fingolfin, who is the second son of Finwë.

Noldor leaders, is doomed to this end. As a response to this warning, Turgon left helm, mail, and sword in Nevrast before going to his secret city. Tuor, the son of Huor, found this token and took them to Gondolin, Turgon's secret city. The coming of Tuor with tokens symbolizes the fact that the doom of Turgon was near. As a matter of fact, Ulmo's prophecy came true, and Turgon died in the Orc attack in his city, which he had built in great secrecy. There is a similar process of initiation seen in other mythologies here. Theseus of Athens, one of the most well-known heroes of classical Greek mythology, proves that he stepped into adulthood by finding the token (sword) left behind by his father Aegeus and that he was his father's heir. Likewise, when Tuor also arrived in the city of Gondolin, he fell in love with Turgon's daughter Idril and married her. Marrying Idril, Turgon's only heir, Tuor became a kind of heir to Gondolin. He succeeded in escaping from Gondolin under attack with Idril so that Turgon's successor¹⁶⁴ continued to change the history of Middle-earth in some way. This explains why Ulmo specifically had warned Turgon.

Another critical prophecy about Middle-earth is related to the Last Battle called Dagor Dagorath. According to the prophecy, this war will be the one in which Arda will end, and all the doom or fate will be resolved. Dagor Dagorath, also referred to as the "Battle of Battles," was particularly and often voiced by Mandos. It is stated that with this end, all bonds will be resolved, and creation will be completed. As stated in footnote 141, among the stars or constellations created by Varda, Menelmacar was specially created as a sign of this end. There are many different versions of how this war will occur, but the only thing they all agree is that Melkor/Morgoth, who was sent into the void, will re-enter Arda, and the war will begin in this way. Apart from this, the first fathers of the Dwarves created by Aulë, mentioned above, will also fight alongside Aulë in this last battle, and thus "their part shall be to serve Aulë and to aid him in the remaking of Arda after the Last Battle" (Tolkien, 1999: 39). So, although it is not known exactly what will happen to Arda after the Last Battle, the emphasis that the Dwarves will help Aulë reshape Arda can be read as a sign that Arda will be a world free from the ferocious enemy after Dagor Dagorath. Thus, a world and universe designed by Ilúvatar in the first place will eventually be completed in this way.

¹⁶⁴ When Tuor and Idril's sons, named Eärendil grew up, he set sail to the West and sought help from the Valar. This call for help had been foreseen by the Eldar as a prophecy: "It is a prophecy among us that one day a messenger from Middle-earth will come through the shadows to Valinor, and Manwë will hear, and Mandos relent" (Tolkien, 2013: 53).

3.2. The Valar as Natural Elements

It is mentioned earlier that the Valar are above all the angelic powers created by Ilúvatar, and worth noting that at first they were called the Ainur; the Valar are those who decided to live in Arda and “govern Arda’s natural elements and aid its inhabitants against Melkor’s malice” (Donovan, 2014: 93). Specific power is assigned to each by Ilúvatar, which becomes their domain. Others besides Melkor prepared and glorified Arda for the arrival of the Children of Ilúvatar. Some also became tutors to the first comers of the Elves. When they first entered, Arda was in total darkness and void. The Valar assumed their duties after the vision shown to them by Ilúvatar. Each of them represents some natural elements and presides over different areas of nature. Tolkien seems to combine both deities and natural phenomena like the ancient mythologies and make them as one and all.

On the one hand, each of these gods represents a part of nature; on the other hand, they are honoured and even sometimes worshipped as divinities. The exact mode of creation, namely deities’ coming into existence, can also be seen in ancient Greek mythology. Gaia, for instance, is both a deity with a body and also the Earth itself. Ancient Greece believed and worshiped her as a primordial deity and knew that she represents the Earth itself. In addition, the Valar live in the physical world, if not among mortals, as in Greek mythology; “as the Greek gods supposedly lived on Mount Olympus, so the Valar live in the far West. Unlike their Greek counterparts they do not visit Middle-earth (or no longer do) but send messengers and helpers” (Stanton, 2001: 17).

The concept of the divinity of Tolkien’s mythology is partly anthropomorphic (Carpenter, 2006: 285), as stated before. Ilúvatar is never seen to take a human form in Tolkien’s legendarium. He is much more a cosmic god who communicates primarily with the Elves and the Men with cosmic epiphanies. However, the Valar, after entering Arda, took human forms and gender as stated in the “Creation Myth.” The anthropomorphic conception of divinities is widely seen in comparative religions, as well. The deities of ancient Greece took human forms but more resplendent in size. However, they could also metamorphose into whomever or whatever shapes they wished to. As Wood (2003) suggests: “Fifteen of these angelic [V]alar are named. They are pure spirits, having no natural bodily existence and thus no mortal limits. Yet they assume shape and gender, both masculine and feminine, in order that the Children of Iluvatar might know and love them all—except, of course, the one rebel who sought to

frustrate Ilúvatar's will for the world" (13). Unlike their appearances, their names were given to them by the Elves, for "the Valar had no language of their own" (Carpenter, 2006: 282). Like their appearances, though, their names suggest their own "peculiarity, function, or deed" (Carpenter, 2006: 282).

The natural elements that the Valar assumes or dominates are divided into four groups by Curry (2004): "[T]hey are related to the ancient elements (fire, earth, air and water) in a characteristically pagan way" (184). The Valar has adopted each of these four elements found in traditional eco-cosmogony on their symbolic levels. Thus the area ruled and dominated by each god has become more transparent and more traditional. In this context, it will be explained how these four elements are adopted by the Valar in a grouped manner. It is important here to note that the matching of some male and female Valar stands for a complementary effect. The male and the female matched complement one another and became more powerful when together, as in the following quotation from *The Silmarillion*:

When Manwë there ascends his throne and looks forth, if Varda is beside him, he sees further than all other eyes, through mist, and through darkness, and over the leagues of the sea. And if Manwë is with her, Varda hears more clearly than all other ears the sound of voices that cry from east to west, from the hills and the valleys, and from the dark places that Melkor has made upon Earth (Tolkien, 1999: 16).

As deduced from the quotation above, the gods become more potent against evil when they stay together. This is what Tolkien may try to state that evil cannot be defeated all alone. It is worthwhile when the powers are united. Furthermore, each individual has a specific attribute which would be enough to defeat the evil when it is united with the other individuals' specific attributes.

3.2.1. Air

Manwë, who leads the air element, is the Lord of the Breath of Arda and King of the Valinor. Symbolically identified with wind and breath, the air element is also the meaning of "the breath of universal life" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 10). This situation explains why Manwë is the King of the Valinor. His being one of the most

faithful Valar to Ilúvatar's music also makes him identify with breath.¹⁶⁵ The pronouns “his” and “him” are used because he took the form of male and matched with Varda, the Queen of the Stars, who is likewise in the air element. Unlike the nature of the elements Earth and Water, which “is considered material, that of Air is spiritual” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 9). With his wife Varda, he dwelt on the highest peak of the Mountains of Valinor.

He ruled and governed Arda from his throne, and he possessed all the information he needed with the help of his servants: “Spirits in the shape of hawks and eagles flew ever to and from his halls; and their eyes could see to the depths of the seas, and pierce the hidden caverns beneath the world. Thus they brought word to him of well nigh all that passed in Arda” (Tolkien, 1999: 33). Accordingly, he possessed the complete knowledge of the mind of Ilúvatar. Manwë “is said to be ‘brother’ of Melkor, which is they were coëval and equipotent in the mind of the Creator. Melkor became the rebel, and the Diabolos¹⁶⁶ of these tales, who disputed the kingdom of Arda with Manwë” (Carpenter, 2006: 283).¹⁶⁷ As the ruler of Arda, Manwë was responsible both for natural and social order in the world. However, Ilúvatar held sovereignty all over Eä, and he became an external god from this point of view. It is physically accurate since Ilúvatar kept himself out of Arda; however, he shared “his gifts and the responsibility to govern his creation through a complex system of subsidiarity” (Birzer, 2003: 54-5). If it should come to Manwë's area of power again, the following lines can be given from *The Silmarillion* as such: “In Arda his delight is in the winds and the clouds, and in all the regions of the air, from heights to the depths, from the utmost borders of the Veil of Arda to the breezes that blow in the grass. Súlimo he is surnamed, Lord of the Breath of Arda. All swift birds, strong of wing, he loves, and they come and go at his bidding” (Tolkien, 1999: 16). As understood from the quotation, Manwë belongs to the class of celestial gods in world mythologies. Zeus, from Greek mythology, is also one of them. In Homer's *Iliad* (1991), he is represented to move “the heavens, the clouds and the

¹⁶⁵ The gods equivalent to Manwë in world mythologies are as follows: Num of the Samayeds (inhabits the sky, rules the winds and rains, sees and knows all that happens on the earth, rewards the good and punishes the wicked); Iranian Vayu and Indian Vāyu (god of the wind and of its homologues, “breath” and the “cosmic soul;” Chinese Ti (rain, wind, drought). For further information, look at Mircea Eliade's all three volumes of *A History of Religious Ideas*.

¹⁶⁶ devil

¹⁶⁷ In world mythologies and religious systems, this duality and equivalence can easily be seen among the primordial deities. These equivalent gods later became rivals and they represented the duality of good and evil sides. This is called as “symbolic opposition” by Dumézil (1988: 124).

high clear sky” (393). In addition to this, eagles¹⁶⁸ were Manwë’s, like Zeus’s, spies which “flew ever to and from his halls; and their eyes could see to the depths of the seas, and pierce the hidden caverns beneath the world” (Tolkien, 1999: 33). When its symbolic meaning is looked at, it is stated that “the eagle is so important a symbol that there is no written or pictorial image, historic or mythic, in European or any other civilization, in which it is not the companion, when it is not the representative of the highest gods” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 323). Thus, many times Manwë’s epiphanies appear as wind or eagle in *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Sometimes “the voice of Manwë as a mighty wind” (Tolkien, 1999: 29) is heard, and sometimes he sends eagles to Middle-earth to rescue some Elves from Melkor: “[He sent] forth the race of Eagles, commanding them to dwell in the crags of the North, and to keep watch upon Morgoth; for Manwë still had pity for the exiled Elves” (Tolkien, 1999: 124-5). As his last description, it should be stated that Manwë held a sceptre made out of sapphire,¹⁶⁹ which officially makes him “the vicegerent of Ilúvatar, King of the world of Valar and Elves and Men, and the chief defence against the evil of Melkor” (Tolkien, 1999: 33).

Although Manwë is the highest among the Valar, there are some events in which even Manwë could make some mistakes. To give an example, Manwë forgave Melkor when he was released after having been imprisoned in the Halls of Mandos for three ages. Except for Manwë, the rest of the Valar did not believe in Melkor’s prayers to be forgiven, and they were so right not to. However, since Manwë is their king, they had to obey his judgement. Tolkien himself explains such attributes of the powers in one of his letters as in the following:

¹⁶⁸ “Sometimes the Supreme Being is represented in the form of an eagle” (Eliade, 1989: 70).

¹⁶⁹ “As the supremely celestial jewel, the sapphire absorbs all the symbolism of blue. According to a medieval treatise on precious stones, ‘meditation upon this stone carries the soul to heavenly contemplation’ (MARA). Again, as in ancient Greece, so in the Middle Ages there was a belief that sapphires cured eye-diseases and set prisoners free. Alchemists related it to the element Air. The eleventh-century Bishop Marbodius described it in these words: ‘Sapphires possess a beauty like that of the heavenly throne; they denote the hearts of the simple, of those moved by a sure hope and of those whose lives shine with their good deeds and virtuousness’ (GOUL p. 214). Similarly, Conrad of Haimbord regarded the sapphire as the jewel of hope (ibid. P. 218). Since divine justice was seated in it, such varied Powers were attributed to the sapphire as ‘to stave off poverty, to protect against the anger of the great, against treason and against miscarriage of justice, to increase valour, joy and vitality, to drive away ill humour and to strengthen the muscles’. In India and Arabia, sapphires are valued as preservatives against the plague, a burning disease linked to chthonian fire (BUDA) [...] Like all blue Stones, in the East, the sapphire is regarded as a powerful charm against the evil eye” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 826).

[T]he purpose was precisely to limit and hinder their exhibition of ‘power’ on the physical plane, and so that they should do what they were primarily sent for: train, advise, instruct, arouse the hearts and minds of those threatened by Sauron to a resistance with their own strengths; and not just to do the job for them [...] But in this ‘mythology’ all the ‘angelic’ powers concerned with this world were capable of many degrees of error and failing between the absolute Satanic rebellion and evil of Morgoth and his satellite Sauron, and the faineance of some of the other higher powers or ‘gods’ (Carpenter, 2006: 202).

The consequence of Manwë’s mistake to believe in Melkor is the end of the Years of the Two Trees. Since Melkor, with the help of Ungoliant,¹⁷⁰ destroyed the Two Trees, which had been the lights of Aman, and drove it to darkness, Fëanor’s Silmarils were the only chance for the rebirth of the Two Trees. However, it was understood that Melkor had stolen them and fled to Middle-earth. After that, Fëanor gathered his kinsfolk, namely the Noldor, and left Aman to follow Melkor. This event is a turning point for the fate of Aman and Middle-earth, including the inhabitants of the two.

Varda, like her husband, has the highest position in the Blessed Realm. As stated before, she created new stars and constellations for Arda so that they can illuminate Middle-earth.¹⁷¹ Since she is a celestial goddess, she has a significant role in the creation of the Sun and the Moon: “These vessels the Valar gave to Varda, that they might become lamps of heaven, outshining the ancient stars, being nearer to Arda; and she gave them power to traverse the lower regions of Ilmen,¹⁷² and set them to voyage upon appointed courses above the girdle of the Earth from the West unto the East and to return” (Tolkien, 1999: 109). To “guide the vessel of the Sun” (Tolkien, 1999: 110), the maiden Arien, a Maiar, was chosen. The reason why she was chosen is explained as such: “[S]he had not feared the heats of Laurelin, and was unhurt by them, being from the beginning a spirit of fire,”¹⁷³ adding that “she was as a naked flame, terrible in the fullness of her splendour” (Tolkien, 1999: 110). To steer “the island of the Moon” (Tolkien, 1999: 110), Tilion was chosen. However, it was Arien whom Melkor/Morgoth hated so much that he sent “forth great reek and dark cloud to hide his land from the light of the Day-star” (Tolkien, 1999: 111).

¹⁷⁰ Ancient ally of Melkor; an evil creature of spider-form.

¹⁷¹ The gods equivalent to Varda in world mythologies are as follows: Marduk in Akkadian religion (who fixed the courses of the stars); Varuna (one of the Vedic gods); Germanic gods/brothers Tiamat, Ymir, Puruṣa. For further information, look at Mircea Eliade’s all three volumes of *A History of Religious Ideas*.

¹⁷² The highest of the heavens over Arda.

¹⁷³ Which is related to the Flame Imperishable of Ilúvatar.

Firstly, both of their courses over Arda were planned to “pass from Valinor into the east and return, the one issuing from the west as the other turned from the east. Thus the first of the new days were reckoned after the manner of the Trees, from the mingling of the lights when Arien and Tilion passed in their courses, above the middle of the Earth” (Tolkien, 1999: 111). However, sometimes, the Moon was darkened when Tilion could not adjust its pace and did not stick to the prescribed course, especially when he attempted to approach Anar.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, Varda changed their courses one more time:

Varda changed her counsel, and allowed a time wherein the world should still have shadow and half-light. Anar rested therefore a while in Valinor, lying upon the cool bosom of the Outer Sea; and Evening, the time of the descent and resting of the Sun, was the hour of greatest light and joy in Aman. But soon the Sun was drawn down by the servants of Ulmo, and went then in haste under the Earth, and so came unseen to the east and there mounted the heaven again, lest night be over-long and evil walk under the Moon. But by Anar the waters of the Outer Sea were made hot and glowed with coloured fire, and Valinor had light for a while after the passing of Arien. Yet as she journeyed under the Earth and drew towards the east the glow faded and Valinor was dim, and the Valar mourned then most for the death of Laurelin. At dawn the shadows of the Mountains of Defence lay heavy on the Blessed Realm” (Tolkien, 1999: 111-2).

As deduced from the quotation above, the Sun’s course was from the West to the east. However, when the Sun journeys from the east to the West with Varda’s changing, it becomes the day. Accordingly, when the Sun journeys “under the Earth and drew towards the east,” it becomes night. Thus, as mentioned before, the concept of time began, and “the changing and ageing of all things was hastened exceedingly” with the Sun (Tolkien, 1999: 115).

Finally, Varda is the only one whom is prayed by the Elves when needed. In accordance with this, Frodo and Sam in *The Lord of the Rings* pray to her at their darkest times. She is called “Elbereth” in the prayers; for this reason, Frodo and Sam also call her Elbereth in their prayers as in the following: “‘*Gilthoniel, A Elbereth!*’ Sam cried. For, why he did not know, his thought sprang back suddenly to the Elves in the Shire, and the song that drove away the Black Rider in the trees” (Tolkien, 2004: 915). This calling to Elbereth, namely Varda, is an exception since the inhabitants of Arda

¹⁷⁴ The Sun.

“had [...] no petitionary prayers to God” (Carpenter, 2006: 206). Apart from Manwë and Varda, no other Vala are representing the air element.

3.2.2. Water

Ranked in the second line, Ulmo,¹⁷⁵ unlike Manwë, was not matched with any Valier.¹⁷⁶ As a Lord of the Waters,¹⁷⁷ it can be said that he is not an anthropomorphic god since he did not like it. One reason why Ulmo did not want to take any shape may be because the water element also does not have any shape: “Water, say the Chinese, is *Wu-chi*, Chaos, primordial formlessness” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 1081). This formlessness causes Ulmo to communicate with the inhabitants of Middle-earth through the sounds of the waters. It was Ulmo who convinced some of the Eldar, right after they awakened, to live in Aman with the Valar. Since the water element is “a source of life, a vehicle of cleansing and a centre of regeneration” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 1081), the Elves think that “the spirit of Ulmo runs in all the veins of the world” (Tolkien, 1999: 17).

Water is the only element that Melkor cannot subdue. For “water is the ‘substantial’ shape of manifestation, the origin of life, the element of bodily and spiritual regeneration and the symbol of fertility, purity, wisdom, grace and virtue” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 1081), it explains the reason why Melkor was full of desire to capture the water element: “It is said that in the making of Arda he endeavoured to draw Ossë¹⁷⁸ to his allegiance, promising to him all the realm and power of Ulmo, if he would serve him” (Tolkien, 1999: 22). As an element, the water is the opposite of fire, and assuming that Melkor is a representative of the fire element, it is seen that Ulmo and Melkor come across many times in *The Silmarillion*. However, although they are also depicted with water and partly air, frost, snow, clouds, mists, and

¹⁷⁵ Like Manwë, Ulmo understands very well Ilúvatar’s purpose of creation and acts accordingly. That is why he says: “I will seek Manwë, that he and I may make melodies for ever to thy delight!” (Tolkien, 1999: 9).

¹⁷⁶ The female Powers, namely goddesses.

¹⁷⁷ The gods equivalent to Ulmo in world mythologies are as follows: In Canaanite myth, Yam is the lord of the seas and underground waters; Sumerian Nammu is the goddess of the sea; in Akkadian religion, Apsu (fresh water) and Tiamat (sea) have aquatic totality; Egyptian Re is the Solar God with the primordial ocean and Indo-Europeans religion, Varuna; Poseidon in ancient Greek mythology. For further information, look at Mircea Eliade’s all three volumes of *A History of Religious Ideas*.

¹⁷⁸ A Maia, serving to Ulmo.

rain are natural phenomena created by Melkor to spoil Ulmo's work.¹⁷⁹ When looked at these natural phenomena, it is seen that the decrease in air temperature forms the common points. As the Nordic understanding of after-life is identified with "a cooler temperature" (Eliade, 1958: 199), it is not surprising that these natural phenomena belong to Melkor when the exploitation of the life energies of those under the influence of Melkor and their turning into a shadow is read as an after-life.

Melkor often uses these natural phenomena in implementing his plans. For example, the Elven lineages invited to Valinor could not cross the narrowest point of the sea between Aman and Middle-earth at the far north when they arrived at the western shores of Middle-earth due to the ice and frosts of Melkor. Likewise, he managed to protect himself and his stronghold Angband by using these natural phenomena: "[T]he Iron Mountains, from whose great curving wall the towers of Thangorodrim were thrust forward, defended it upon either side, and were impassable to the Noldor, because of their snow and ice" (Tolkien, 1999: 131). During the Siege of Angband, Morgoth, who remained in his castle, did not allow a single Noldor elf to pass. Moreover, the names of certain regions by the Noldor elves derive from these natural phenomena that Melkor used for his own evil plans. For example, the land of Hísílóme in the west of Thangorodrim was called the Land of the Mist by the Noldor elves, for when they came from Valinor to Middle-earth after Melkor, it was their first encampment, and Melkor sent clouds to that land (Tolkien, 1999: 135). As can be seen from the examples, although Melkor did not seem to capture the water element, he managed to use some natural phenomena that the half air and half water element has.

Although Ulmo did not intend to take any shape, as stated above, he sometimes needed to show his grand stature to the Elves as such: "If the Children of Eru beheld him they were filled with a great dread; for the arising of the King of the Sea was terrible, as a mounting wave that strides to the land, with dark helm foam-crested and raiment of mail shimmering from silver down into shadows of green" (Tolkien, 1999: 17). The majesty of Ulmo, which surfaced with the waves, is as magnificent as it is frightening. Rather than a sceptre, he had great horns named "Ulumúri, that are wrought of white shell" through which he made his music (namely the sounds of the water) (Tolkien, 1999: 17). When the Eldar was summoned to Valinor, they marched to the

¹⁷⁹ In addition to this, it is narrated that although Melkor's aim is to spoil Ulmo's work, he unintentionally helped these phenomena to be formed. Thus, Ilúvatar's declaration that all Melkor's deeds would be a tributary to the glory of the universe is exemplified here.

west coasts of Middle-earth and did not take the ice passage in the north as stated above. Upon this, Ulmo helped them to cross the sea with an island ferry as in the following:

Ulmo uprooted an island which long had stood alone amid the sea, far from either shore, since the tumults of the fall of Illuin; and with the aid of his servants he moved it, as it were a mighty ship, and anchored it in the Bay of Balar, into which Sirion poured his water. Then the Vanyar¹⁸⁰ and the Noldor embarked upon that isle, and were drawn over the sea, and came at last to the long shores beneath the Mountains of Aman (Tolkien, 1999: 56).

When the Vanyar and Noldor crossed the sea and reached the coasts of Aman, one group of the Elves stayed behind, for they did not want to leave Middle-earth. Later on, they regretted their decision, but this time the Valar did not come forward. Upon this, Ulmo helped them as he had done to the first groups. With the help of Ulmo, the last group came to the Bay of Eldamar. However, they were sea-lovers, and they did not want to live far away from the sea. As a solution, “the island was not moved again, and stood there alone in the Bay of Eldamar; and it was called Tol Eressëa, the Lonely Isle. There the Teleri¹⁸¹ abode as they wished under the stars of heaven, and yet within right of Aman and the deathless shore” (Tolkien, 1999: 58).

Apart from Ulmo, it is a Valier Nienna who else represents the water element. Ranked in the third line beneath Varda, Nienna is among the most important three queens of the Valar. Like Ulmo, she is single. She is described in *The Silmarillion* as in the following: “She is acquainted with grief, and mourns for every wound that Arda has suffered in the marring of Melkor. So great was her sorrow, as the Music unfolded, that her song turned to lamentation long before its end, and the sound of mourning was woven into the themes of the World before it began” (Tolkien, 1999: 19). She is also known as the Lady of Tears for crying out of her grief, and she played a significant role in making the Two Trees of Valinor. When Ungoliant devoured the Trees that she had grown with tears, she cleaned the mound again with her tears and ensured that one last fruit and flower emerged from there. This narrative shows which side of the water element Nienna represents. The growth of the Trees Nienna feeds with tears demonstrates the fertility power of water in cosmogony.

¹⁸⁰ Fair-Elves, the first group who reached Valinor and stayed there. They are the closest Elves to the Valar.

¹⁸¹ Sea-Elves.

3.2.3. Fire

Ranked in the third line beneath Manwë, Aulë is among the most powerful gods with Manwë and Ulmo. These three gods mostly shaped Arda with their areas of influence. He is matched with Yavanna, the Queen of the Earth. The most important story about this god, the making of the Dwarves, is told in the subheading “Creation Myth” above. Like Manwë did, Aulë made a mistake in the eyes of Ilúvatar, which Tolkien comments as a “fell” such in the following: “[F]or he desired to see the Children, that he became impatient and tried to anticipate the will of the Creator” (Carpenter, 2006: 287). Even though the existence of the free will of the gods is not a concern to doubt in Ilúvatar’s design, Aulë can be said to have come very close to trespass the boundary between himself and Ilúvatar, which separates the angelic powers from the supreme cosmocrator.¹⁸² There are undoubtedly some parts in the design which the Valar did not have enough knowledge to understand though they were the highest in power. They had to be faithful to both Ilúvatar and his plan; they had better follow his instructions and the vision Ilúvatar had shown them, and last but not least, they should not dare to cross the boundary, in this matter creating a race, which belongs to Ilúvatar’s sovereignty only.

Among the names given to Aulë, “The Smith” is vital for the element of fire. Since he is the “Maker of Middle-earth,” he used fire in many of his inventions. Also, thanks to this element, Aulë was able to help the Elves and the Men. The Elves greatly admired his craft with fire, and the fire craft of the Elves was bestowed on them by Aulë. Thanks to this craft, the hand skills of the Elves expanded, and they were able to fulfil their superior existence since “the symbolism of fire marks ‘the most important stage in the intellectualization’ of the cosmos” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 382).

In addition to the positive connotation of the fire element, there is also a negative one, and in Tolkien’s legendarium, Melkor represents it. As “[i]ts smoke blinds and stifles and the fires of love, punishment and war burn, devour and destroy” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 382), Melkor is the destructive side of this cosmology. A good blacksmith as Aulë, Melkor disrupted Aulë’s inventions with this craft and caused the Rings of Power that changed the destiny of Middle-earth. As it can be understood, there are both productive and destructive sides of blacksmithing. Representing the

¹⁸² Creator and master of the world: “As cosmocrator, God resides in heaven and manifests his presence or his will in meteorological phenomena-lightning, thunder, rain” (Eliade, 1978: 337).

cosmogonic and creative side of blacksmithing, Aulë, such as Vedic Bramanaspati,¹⁸³ “‘cast’ the world, the work of his smithy being the creation of being from a state of non-being” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 97). He realized Ilúvatar’s vision very close to reality with his craft and turned the non-being into being. Although this holds Aulë in an important position among the Valar, his craft is equivalent to that of the other Valar (especially Manwë and Ulmo). After all, as is the case with other Valar, “[t]he primeval blacksmith [...] is not the creator, but his assistant, his instrument, the maker of the god’s tools or the organizer of the created world” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 97). For Melkor, who is in the opposite situation, blacksmithing turned into a craft of negation. This situation can be best explained as follows:

Nevertheless, the blacksmith’s symbolic share in the work of creation carries with it the serious danger of negation, of diabolic parody in forbidden activity. Furthermore, since metal is drawn from the bowels of the earth, the smithy relates to subterranean fire and smiths are sometimes monsters or identified with the guardians of buried treasure. They therefore embody an aspect which inspires fear and may rightly be termed ‘infernal’. Their trade connects them with sorcery and magic and this is why they are often more or less excluded from society (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 97).

As can be seen from the quotation, and as discussed above in the subheading “Creation Myth,” Melkor was excluded from the Valar because he opposed the music of Ilúvatar and negated what was done by the other Valar for the sake of Middle-earth. He stands alone as power and is very good with magic. Moreover, Sauron, who later replaced Melkor, was one of Aulë’s Maiar. He used what he learned from Aulë to shape Middle-earth for his evil purposes. The Noldor, led by Finwë, also became the closest to Aulë. Like Aulë, the Noldor loved to deal with blacksmithing and producing jewellery from precious stones.

3.2.4. Earth

Being responsible for the creatures that grow, live, and reproduce on Middle-earth, and as the wife of Aulë, Yavanna is in the second line beneath Varda. She is one of the most critical Valier for Middle-earth, and she is also called “the Giver of Fruits.”

¹⁸³ The first blacksmith.

She has a similar mythical story of making (or causing) a new race like her spouse, which in one of the letters of Tolkien is accounted as such:

No one knew whence they (Ents) came or first appeared. The High Elves said that the Valar did not mention them in the 'Music'. But some (Galadriel) were [of the] opinion that when Yavanna discovered the mercy of Eru to Aulë in the matter of the Dwarves, she besought Eru (through Manwë) asking him to give life to things made of living things not stone, and that the Ents were either souls sent to inhabit trees, or else that slowly took the likeness of trees owing to their inborn love of trees. (Not all were good [words illegible]) The Ents thus had mastery *over stone*. The males were devoted to Oromë, but the Wives to Yavanna (Carpenter, 2006: 335; emphasis in original).

These tree-like people, namely Ents, are in relation with Yavanna's sphere of influence since she is the goddess that is responsible for the flora of Middle-earth and Arda in general: "She is the lover of all things that grow in the earth, and all their countless forms she holds in her mind, from the trees like towers in forests long ago to the moss upon stones or the small and secret things in the mould" (Tolkien, 1999: 18).

In addition to this ecologically important description, Yavanna's taking shape can also contribute to the eco-cosmological dimension of this universe: "Some there are who have seen her standing like a tree under heaven, crowned with the Sun; and from all its branches there spilled a golden dew upon the barren earth, and it grew green with corn; but the roots of the tree were in the waters of Ulmo, and the winds of Manwë spoke in its leaves" (Tolkien, 1999: 18). As mentioned earlier, the contributions of Ulmo and Manwë as Yavanna's taking shape show very clearly the connections of each god to each other in cosmogony. Both the religious and ecological meanings of this connection are significant. In this way, there is a reference to each individual's contribution to biodiversity - from top to bottom - in the divine cosmos.

Apart from that, Yavanna's care for Arda's flora does not hesitate to confront her with her husband, Aulë. It would be good to elaborate on how these spouses came across their respective spheres, starting with the text quoted from a letter by Tolkien above. After learning that Aulë created the Dwarves, Yavanna's conversation with her husband begins as such: "[T]hy children will have little love for the things of my love. They will love first the things made by their own hands, as doth their father. They will delve in the earth, and the things that grow and live upon the earth they will not heed.

Many a tree shall feel the bite of their iron without pity” (Tolkien, 1999: 39). Aulë’s response to Yavanna’s concern over the damage that Aulë’s Dwarves would inflict on her field of power, namely Arda’s flora, is as follows: “That shall also be true of the Children of Ilúvatar; for they will eat and they will build. And though the things of thy realm have worth in themselves, and would have worth if no Children were to come, yet Eru will give them dominion, and they shall use all that they find in Arda: though not, by the purpose of Eru, without respect or without gratitude” (Tolkien, 1999: 39-40). This response of Aulë to his worried wife Yavanna contains a reference to the position of people in our world. Since first human beings, it has been confronted with the justified opposition of Yavanna, who represents the green, even though the exploitation of nature by human beings is to meet their own needs. In addition, it is stated before that the reason why this universe was created is not that it serves the inhabitants, but because its existence is essential. That is why, even if the Children of Ilúvatar do not come, every natural formation in this universe is precious. Nevertheless, as Aulë says, it is an inevitable end for those who will come to dominate nature. Yavanna, who was not satisfied with this answer given by Aulë, went to talk with Manwë this time, and this speech provides information that needs to be examined in terms of the domination of nature:

‘[I]s it true, as Aulë hath said to me, that the Children when they come shall have dominion over all the things of my labour, to do as they will therewith?’ ‘It is true,’ said Manwë. ‘But why dost thou ask, for thou hadst no need of the teaching of Aulë?’ Then Yavanna was silent and looked into her own thought. And she answered: ‘Because my heart is anxious, thinking of the days to come. All my works are dear to me. Is it not enough that Melkor should have marred so many? *Shall nothing that I have devised be free from the dominion of others?*’ ‘If thou hadst thy will what wouldst thou reserve?’ said Manwë. ‘Of all thy realm what dost thou hold dearest?’ ‘All have their worth,’ said Yavanna, ‘and *each contributes to the worth of the others*. But the *kelvar*¹⁸⁴ can flee or defend themselves, whereas the *olvar*¹⁸⁵ that grow cannot. And among these I hold trees dear. 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. So I see in my thought. Would that the trees might speak on behalf of all things that have roots, and punish those that wrong them!’ ‘This is a strange thought,’ said Manwë. ‘Yet it was in the Song,’ said Yavanna. ‘For while thou wert in the heavens and with Ulmo built the clouds and poured out the rains, I lifted up the branches of great trees to receive them, and some sang to Ilúvatar amid the wind and the rain.’ (Tolkien, 1999: 40).

In this lengthy but essential conversation between Manwë and Yavanna, the situation in which Yavanna worried about Arda’s flora and fauna is presented even more broadly. Yavanna did not want to allow any domination of her designs and creations. This rejection serves this dissertation’s purpose by emphasizing that each one is valuable and necessary in itself, without separating any living and non-living beings, with her answer to the question “Of all thy realm what dost thou hold dearest?” asked by Manwë.

Following this conversation, the sentences that Manwë spoke to Yavanna after consulting Ilúvatar also explain that the plants and animals in Arda are no different from other inhabitants: “When the Children awake, then the thought of Yavanna will awake also, and it will summon spirits from afar, and they will go among the *kelvar* and the *olvar*, and some will dwell therein, and be held in reverence, and their just anger shall be feared” (Tolkien, 1999: 41; emphasis in original). All plants and animals in Arda would come to life with Ilúvatar’s Children and contribute to biodiversity. In the name of blessing and caring about this diversity, Yavanna “set times for the flowering and the ripening of all things that grew in Valinor; and at each first gathering of fruits Manwë

¹⁸⁴ Animals.

¹⁸⁵ Plants.

made a high feast for the praising of Eru, when all the peoples of Valinor poured forth their joy in music and song upon Taniquetil” (Tolkien, 1999: 78).

Due to the seasonal transition and the celebration of the harvest festivals, Yavanna is the equivalent of fertility goddesses encountered in many mythologies: Freya of the Norse mythology, Demeter of the Greek mythology, and the ancient Mesopotamian goddess Inanna/Ishtar. For this reason, Yavanna can be considered the most powerful goddess representing the earth element. However, the other Valar who represent the earth element should not be ignored according to this view. Each of them makes a considerable contribution to this element.

Also known as Lord of Forests and ranked in the fourth line beneath Manwë, Oromë is matched with Vána.¹⁸⁶ He is the one who first discovered the newly awakened Eldar at Cuiviénen. As a great hunter, he rode a horse and used his bow and arrows to kill the monsters and evil beasts serving Melkor. He used horns in order to scare these beasts, and hounds were his most prominent companions. Even Huan, who assisted Lúthien and Beren to retrieve the Silmarils from Melkor, was also given to Celegorm¹⁸⁷ by Oromë.

3.2.5 The Fifth Element/Spirit

In the First Chapter, the definition of the spirit and its meaning in the ecological dimension was discussed, and different word types of this definition were looked at. In Tolkien’s mythology, the synonym of the spirit is “fëa.” Unlike fëa, which means immaterial, the word “hröa” is used for material, namely bodily existence. In the order of the Valar, Irmo (Lórien) and Mandos are called the Masters of the Spirits: The Fëanturi.¹⁸⁸ Irmo, who gets his name from his garden (Lórien) in Valinor, is known as the God of Dreams. Ranked in the sixth line beneath Manwë, he is matched with Estë, whose name suggests “rest” (Tolkien, 1999: 396). In *The Silmarillion*, they are described as in the following:

¹⁸⁶ Like her older sister Yavanna, Vána takes responsibility for everything (especially flowers) that grows in Arda.

¹⁸⁷ One of the sons of Fëanor. He is a hunter.

¹⁸⁸ The Valar mentioned so far are under the representation of the word hröa, while Irmo and Mandos represent the word fëa. However, these two concepts provide an inseparable integrity. Neither hröa is superior to fëa, nor fëa is superior to hröa. Although the soul, breath or spirit tries to be perceived as an element independent of the body, this situation causes some misreading consequences. For further information, look at Eliade’s *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 1, page 34. Also, another point that should be mentioned here is that fëa is not only found in the Elves, Men, Dwarves and Ents. Animals and plants also have spirit, to recall from the conversation between Yavanna and Manwë.

Irmo the younger is the master of visions and dreams. In Lórien are his gardens in the land of the Valar, and they are the fairest of all places in the world, filled with many spirits. Estë the gentle, healer of hurts and of weariness, is his spouse. Grey is her raiment; and rest is her gift [...] From the fountains of Irmo and Estë all those who dwell in Valinor draw refreshment; and often the Valar come themselves to Lórien and there find repose and easing of the burden of Arda (Tolkien, 1999: 19).

The garden of Irmo is a heavenly-like place where some important characters in Tolkien's mythology go there for some time to find peace. However, besides this, Irmo's dealing with dreams and visions and sending dreams to some important characters is an important feature that distinguishes him from other Valar, composed of natural elements. It is known that some characters living in Middle-earth visited Irmo's garden Lórien by the dream when Tolkien first outlined the myth as such: "[T]he Valar Oromë and Lórien devised strange paths from the Great Lands to Valinor and the way of Lórien's devising was Olórë Mallë, the Path of Dreams; by this road, when 'Men were yet but new-wakened on the earth', 'the children of the fathers of the fathers of Men' came to Valinor in their sleep" (Tolkien, 2015: 1). It is also found in the above quotation from *The Silmarillion* that many spirits resided in the garden of Irmo and Estë. Finally, the nightingales' dwelling in Lórien also symbolically reminds us that these birds have a healing and comforting power to the spirit.

Another Vala, who dealt with the fëar¹⁸⁹ and ranked in the fifth line beneath Manwë, is Mandos. He is matched with Vairë, the weaver of storied webs. In the *Silmarillion*, he is described as in the following: "He is the keeper of the Houses of the Dead, and the summoner of the spirits of the slain. He forgets nothing; and he knows all things that shall be, save only those that lie still in the freedom of Ilúvatar. He is the Doomsman of the Valar; but he pronounces his dooms and his judgements only at the bidding of Manwë" (Tolkien, 1999: 19). According to the description, he is very much like Hades in ancient Greek mythology, also the Lord of the Dead and Ruler of Tartarus. The Halls of Mandos, unlike Tartarus, is not a terrifying place at all in Tolkien's legendarium. It is a kind of waiting place, especially for the spirits of the Elves because Mandos summoned each fëa to the Halls of Waiting. The question of

¹⁸⁹ The plural form of fëa.

eschatology¹⁹⁰ should come forward when Mandos is regarded. “Although Tolkien’s mythology establishes the Halls of Mandos as the site in which Elves wait in the afterlife, no parallel location is mentioned for Men to enter when they die” (103), states Donovan (2014) in her article.

It is a secret to the Elves what happens to the spirits of Men after they die. In *The Silmarillion*, it is implied that only Mandos and Manwë know where the final destination of the spirits of the Men is. For this reason, the judgment in the afterlife regarding the Men race is not explicit. The only thing known is that the Elves rest and recover in the Halls of Mandos until they get prepared to incarnate. The chance to incarnate is given to the Elves because they are immortal; however, the decision is left to the individual.

As the Doomsman of the Valar, Mandos had the power to know some of the upcoming events especially concerning essential characters of the mythology. For instance, he was the one who knew first when the Children of Ilúvatar would awake and declared a doom about their awakening: “[T]he Firstborn shall come in the darkness, and shall look first upon the stars” (Tolkien, 1999: 44). What Mandos refers to here is that when the Eldar first awoke, the Sun and the Moon were not yet created, which means that Middle-earth was under darkness. Because of this, Varda decided to create the stars to illuminate the world, as discussed before. After the awakening of the Elves, he prophesied many important events concerning the Eldar. When Fëanor made the Silmarils, for example, Mandos “foretold that the fates of Arda, earth, sea, and air, lay locked within them. The heart of Fëanor was fast bound to these things that he himself had made” (Tolkien, 1999: 69). Fëanor’s fate being one with the Silmarils also shaped Arda’s fate accordingly. As a result of this interconnected formation of fate, the lives of many characters were shaped accordingly. Therefore, many events that happened to the Noldor people are called the Doom of Mandos: “This doom had been brought on by the disobedience of the elves to the Valar, a disobedience especially associated with Fëanor” (Duriez, 2001: 58). The fact that Fëanor,¹⁹¹ after making the Silmarils, also sealed his own life with these precious stones caused kinship even in Valinor, which was unacceptable by the Valar. Before the kinship, the first revolt against the Valar was also voiced by Fëanor.

¹⁹⁰ The part of religion concerned with death, judgement, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.

¹⁹¹ It is noteworthy that the meaning of the name Fëanor is “Spirit of Fire.”

Vairë, the wife of Mandos, who has a cosmological meaning as necessary as Mandos, is referred to as “Weaver” because she recorded every event on Arda, like knitting a web. The Halls of Mandos, “that ever widen as the ages pass, are clothed therewith” (Tolkien, 1992: 145; pagination is mine), all the things that she weaved. Also known as the “doom-goddess,” Vairë shared the same fate with her husband Mandos in this sense. Just as Mandos represents the whole fate of Arda, so too does Vairë play a significant role in the knitting of this fate. This situation again shows that each god and goddess is not in an independent formation from each other and continues in an interconnected way.

The only Vala and Valier who could not be categorized under these subheadings are Tulkas and Nessa. Strongest of the Valar, Tulkas is ranked in the seventh line beneath Manwë, and he is matched with Nessa. In *The Silmarillion*, he is described as in the following: “Greatest in strength and deeds of prowess is Tulkas, who is surnamed Astaldo, the Valiant. He came last to Arda, to aid the Valar in the first battles with Melkor. He delights in wrestling and in contests of strength; and he rides no steed, for he can outrun all things that go on feet, and he is tireless” (Tolkien, 1999: 19-20). The battle between the Valar and Melkor started in the very beginning after they entered Arda. At that time, Arda had not taken its full shape, so it means that the battle between the powers stands for Arda’s taking a full geographical shape. In this battle, Tulkas played a significant role with his strength and muscular power. In *The Book of Lost Tales 1*, which consists of the first drafts of *The Silmarillion*, Tulkas’ strong and imposing stature is always mentioned in the parts related to him. In this way, Tulkas takes part in the Valar order, representing physical power in cosmogony.

3.3. Evil

In Tolkien’s legendarium, evil is an integral part of the universe. Evil, which assumes different shapes and multiplies since the very creation of Eä, tries to rule Middle-earth and all the living/non-living beings in that world for ages. Although some are physically incarnated, the sensation of evil is often more frightening than the physical body it takes. Shippey (2012) has a different opinion on this as such: “In Middle-earth, then, both good and evil function as external powers and as inner impulses from the psyche. It is perhaps fair to say that while the balances are maintained, we are on the whole more conscious of evil as an objective power and of good as a subjective impulse; Mordor and ‘the Shadow’ are nearer and more visible

than the Valar or ‘luck’” (174). As Shippey points out, the shadow of evil envelops Middle-earth – and Arda in general - like a cloud, and the fear created by this shadow is stronger than the light of the gods living in the Uttermost West. It is also stated by Wood (2003) that evil can confront the good in any shape or form: “Evil is never a spiritual or disembodied reality in Tolkien’s work; it is a political, social, and geographical threat” (138). When this view of Wood is observed throughout the ages of Middle-earth, the conclusion is as follows.

The existence of evil is political because the fate of the established kingdoms of the Elves or Men changed with this evil. The existence of evil is social because many social identities were either concealed or revealed according to the course of evil. Furthermore, most importantly, the existence of evil is geographic because the places where evil originated are not places either to be lived by the Free Peoples of Middle-earth or to be inhabited by any fauna and flora. In addition, the destruction of nature brought about by evil closely affected the geography of Middle-earth. It would be best to start with Melkor, who had the most of these three effects. The last intentionally unlisted Vala is Melkor, for he was banned from the order of the Valar because of his demonized embodiment.

3.3.1 Melkor/Morgoth and Sauron

It has already been discussed that Melkor, the first demonic figure in Tolkien’s legendarium, is the brother of Manwë and his equivalent in power. Eliade (1978) gives many examples of this paradox from prehistoric times, saying as such: “The common descent of antagonistic figures constitutes one of the favourite themes to illustrate the primordial unity-totality” (204). Simply, it can be said that nothing or none of the divinities, powers, or spirits can be externalized at any time. Both opposite sides (good and evil) come into existence out of the One, or they can exist side by side in one body like siblings. When Eliade discusses the Vedic Gods (the Indo-Europeans) in the first volume of his book *A History of Religious Ideas*, he points out these paradoxical elements with the examples of māyās (lesser gods), who are beneath Varuna (the cosmocrator). Two types of māyās (good and evil) are bound to one another and both to Varuna. The evil ones negate or change the doings of the good ones because Eliade (1978) suggests that “the term *māyā* from the root *māy*” means “‘to change’” (201; emphasis in original).

Furthermore, he proposes that negation or change stems from Varuna itself for there is some “magic” in his creation and adds the following: “In the Rig Veda, *māyā* designates ‘destructive change or change that negates good mechanisms, demonic and deceitful change, and also alteration of alteration’” (201-2). As it is clear, the lesser gods beneath Varuna are always at combat, and one is always inclined to change the other’s doing. Nothing in terms of universe and world is perfect from the very beginning. It is still changing and altering because of these opposite powers. On the symbolic level, it can be said that these “alteration of alteration” and negations embody the universe’s still acting of taking shape. Very much the same, in Tolkien’s legendarium, the shape of Arda was changed throughout the ages because of the damages out of some sins and errors. Like Varuna, who “re-establishes the order damaged by sin, error, or ignorance” (Eliade, 1978: 201), Ilúvatar re-shaped Arda whenever damage came to his sovereignty. In addition to this, Melkor in Tolkien’s religion may be the correspondent of evil *māyā* while the rest of the Valar may be the equivalence of good *māyās*. To give an example for it, the following lines from *The Silmarillion* may help:

Yet it is told among the Eldar that the Valar endeavoured ever, in despite of Melkor, to rule the Earth and to prepare it for the coming of the Firstborn; and they built lands and Melkor destroyed them; valleys they delved and Melkor raised them up; mountains they carved and Melkor threw them down; seas they hollowed and Melkor spilled them; and naught might have peace or come to lasting growth, for as surely as the Valar began a labour so would Melkor undo it or corrupt it (Tolkien, 1999: 12).

The Valar, being the good *māyās*, tried to give shape to the world and prepare it for the Children of Ilúvatar. On the other hand, Melkor changed or negated what they had already done. This combat between the goods and the evil symbolizes the geographical changes or alterations that are still going on in the real Earth. Paul Kocher (2004) describes these alike geographic changes in Tolkien’s mythology as follows:

One episode in particular, the reign of Morgoth from his stronghold of Thangorodrim somewhere north of the Shire for the three thousand years of the First Age, produces great changes in Middle-earth geography. To bring about his overthrow the Guardian Valar release titanic natural forces, which cause the ocean to drown not only his fortress but a vast area around it, including the elf kingdoms of Beleriand, Nargothrond, Gondolin, Nogrod, and Belagost. Of that stretch of the northwestern coast only Lindon remains above the waves to appear on Tolkien's Third Age maps. The flooding of rebellious Númenor by the One at the end of the Second Age is a catastrophe of equal magnitude. But Tolkien gives the realm of Morgoth an extra level of allusiveness by describing it as so bitterly cold that after its destruction 'those colds linger still in that region, though they lie hardly more than a hundred leagues north of the Shire' (III, 321) (150).

A crucial question should arise here. Why did Ilúvatar allow Melkor to do all these evil deeds? Eliade and Tolkien may give a reply to this question from a different perspective which also sounds similar. The magic that Varuna uses at the beginning of the creation leads the evil *māyās* to have a right to negation. In other words, it is a part of the design or plan. Although Eliade (1978) states that "[i]n the course of time Varuna will become a *deus otiosus*,¹⁹² surviving principally in the erudition of the ritualists and in religious folklore" (201), it is not because that Varuna ignores the corruption that evil has made. As mentioned before, the evil spirit is a part of the One. Likewise, Tolkien's evil spirit(s) are also the creation of the cosmocrator.

For this reason, Ilúvatar allowed Melkor to distort the themes of the Music, which was included in the plan. In addition to this, the potency that Melkor used to be a Dark Lord was also ascribed by Ilúvatar. Because of Ilúvatar's infinite and almighty power, Melkor had such devastating power. As Donovan (2014) states, "Ilúvatar turns the discord into a pattern of overall unity and purpose" (93). However, as mentioned earlier, Melkor's being after the light of Ilúvatar means that he, at first, did not intend to become a Dark Lord or a Lord referring to darkness. Stemming from this, it can be concluded that while Ilúvatar became the god of light, Melkor became the god of darkness, which is an expected duality but also a totality in the mythologies. For instance, in the ancient Tibetan religion, it is recorded that in the very beginning there occurred a "pure potentiality, between Being and Nonbeing, which nevertheless gives

¹⁹² A creator god who retires later from the governing of the world.

itself the name ‘Created, Master of Being.’ From the ‘Master’ two lights emanate, one white and the other black” (Eliade, 1988: 271). On the one hand, white light becomes the incarnation of the “being” who named itself as “Master;” on the other hand, black light becomes the incarnation of the “Nonbeing” and “author of all evils and calamities” (Eliade, 1988: 271). In the same manner, Melkor turned his face to darkness after he could not grasp the light:

From splendour he fell through arrogance to contempt for all things save himself, a spirit wasteful and pitiless. Understanding he turned to subtlety in perverting to his own will all that he would use, until he became a liar without shame. He began with the desire of Light, but when he could not possess it for himself alone, he descended through fire and wrath into a great burning, down into Darkness. And darkness he used most in his evil works upon Arda, and filled it with fear for all living things (Tolkien, 1999: 23).

From both quotations above, the authorities of the black light become the lords of the darkness because they cannot grasp the white light. This approach stemming from these myths can take the matter to a critical perspective: Is the evil in Tolkien’s legendarium the “absence of the good”? This question is, without a doubt, answered by Wood (2003) as such: “Tolkien has learned from St. Augustine that evil is *privatio boni*, the absence of good” (51; emphasis in original). St. Augustine, in *Enchiridion*, explains what he means with the “absence of good” with an example as such:

In the bodies of animals, disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a cure is effected, that does not mean that the evils which were present—namely, the diseases and wounds—go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist; for the wound or disease is not a substance, but a defect in the fleshly substance,—the flesh itself being a substance, and therefore something good, of which those evils—that is, privations of the good which we call health—are accidents. Just in the same way, what are called vices in the soul are nothing but privations of natural good. And when they are cured, they are not transferred elsewhere: when they cease to exist in the healthy soul, they cannot exist anywhere else (<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf103.iv.ii.xiii.html>).

With the example given by St. Augustine above, it is stressed that evil is a lack of goodness rather than being a natural substance. It may be because of this that the Orcs

of Melkor and Sauron could not wander in the daylight. Concerning *privatio boni* in Middle-earth, “Tolkien wisely describes evil, therefore, as the Shadow: it is something secondary and derivative from the Light, not something primary and positive” (Wood, 2003: 51). However, what Wood suggests here is something both contrast to and alike with what was discussed above concerning Melkor’s being a primordial part of the creation. Stanton (2001), who defends the same idea of Wood, finds it wise that Tolkien should not “represent” Sauron: “[A]ny actual portrayal would have diminished the idea of Sauron, and of his evil” (42). Representing Sauron with only the Eye and describing that Eye with “window into nothing” (Tolkien, 2004: 364) supports the doctrine of the absence of good. However, “[t]his negative quality does not mean that evil is without power: cold after all can destroy you quite effectively” (Stanton, 2001: 42). From this point of view, the evil in Tolkien’s legendarium can be read both as the degeneration of places where goodness is absent or cannot reach, rather than a shape or an object and as a primordial being with a necessity of the duality of the mythos.

The Free Peoples of Middle-earth, who fight against the evil that appears in places where goodness cannot reach, approach their enemies with mercy although they do not show any pity to those who use this “absence of goodness,” such as Melkor and Sauron. This situation is stressed out by Wood (2003) in such words as: “No pagan delight in killing one’s own kind is present anywhere in Tolkien’s work. Since every creature of Ilúvatar is essentially good until inveigled by evil, Tolkien has his heroes repeatedly extend mercy to defeated enemies. Yet there is no forgiveness for the minions of Sauron. The orcs and Uruk-hai are wholly evil, and to slay them is to experience the joy of justice” (94). As Wood points out, battle with pure evil is sacred and inevitable. This inevitable matter of battle with evil brings Tolkien’s concept of evil closer to shamanism. This battle is also inevitable in shamanism, as described by Eliade (1988):

The warrior elements which have great importance in certain types of Asiatic shamanism (cuirass, lance, bow, sword, etc.) are explained by the requirements of combat against the demons, the true enemies of mankind. In a general sense, it can be said that the shaman defends life, health, fecundity, and the world of “light” against death, illnesses, sterility, misfortune, and the world of “darkness.” It is difficult for us to imagine what such a champion could represent for an archaic society. But first of all, there is the certitude that humans are not alone in a strange world, surrounded by demons and “forces of evil.” (19-20).

Although these are the beliefs of different geographies, Tolkien's mythology and shamanism converge in this view because, throughout the ages in Arda, the belief that first Melkor and then Sauron would lose in the end and Ilúvatar would bring the happy ending to the world is always on the spot, which is especially felt heavily by the Elves because of their longevity, namely, their being immortal but limited to Arda's time span. Their lives will end when Arda comes to an end. For this reason, they are more interested in a future full of hope, a time without evil spirits and forces. Fleming Rutledge is one of those scholars who claim that Middle-earth is not alone and will one day be cleansed of all evil. He (2004) expresses this situation as follows in his book called *The Battle for Middle-Earth: Tolkien's Divine Design in The Lord of the Rings*: "But, as the Ring saga so wonderfully shows us, we are not left to ourselves. The Writer of the Story takes an active part in history, and, as Tolkien has said, the stories, myths, and legends that are based in this knowledge and grounded in this promise are capable of offering the reader an unforgettable and transforming vision of the ultimate Victory that is yet to come" (35; pagination is mine). If the "Writer of the Story" is taken as nature itself as a perspective, that "Victory that is yet to come" can be read in terms of the fact that no matter how much damage has been given by the evil, nature will eventually heal itself. Therefore, it will not only be the victory of the Elves or Men but of all living and non-living beings on Earth, which is necessary for the continuity of cosmogony.

3.3.1. a Melkor/Morgoth

Like his brother Manwë, Melkor was one of the first Valar to enter Arda and, as mentioned earlier, intended to spoil all that was done there with good intentions. Additionally, although not classified under the natural elements, Melkor's element is fire. So the first thing he did as soon as he entered Arda was to kindle "great fires" (Tolkien, 1999: 10). Later on, he needed a stronghold in which he could plan his evil designs, and he built Utumno in the north: "Now Melkor began the delving and building of a vast fortress, deep under Earth, beneath dark mountains where the beams of Illuin were cold and dim. That stronghold was named Utumno. And though the Valar knew naught of it as yet, nonetheless the evil of Melkor and the blight of his hatred flowed out thence, and the Spring of Arda was marred" (Tolkien, 1999: 29). He delved Utumno so deep that some of Melkor's servants, who have managed to live till the Third Age, continue to terrorize Middle-earth after Melkor's being expelled from Arda. In addition

to Utumno, he “made also a fortress and armoury not far from the north-western shores of the sea, to resist any assault that might come from Aman. That stronghold was commanded by Sauron, lieutenant of Melkor; and it was named Angband” (Tolkien, 1999: 43-4).

After Utumno had been invaded by the Valar, and Melkor had been held in the Halls of Mandos for three ages, he was able to pardon himself to the Valar in order to execute his evil plans in secret, and he was allowed to wander freely in Valinor for a while not exceeding the limits set for him. Attaining just the freedom he wanted to implement his plans, Melkor approached most the Elves of the Noldor, aiming to destroy Valinor from within, and taught them what they knew about blacksmithing: “[T]he Noldor took delight in the hidden knowledge that he could reveal to them; and some hearkened to words that it would have been better for them never to have heard” (Tolkien, 1999: 67). This “limited freedom” defined to Melkor was enough to ignite events that would change the destiny of Middle-earth. Nevertheless, contrary to what was expected, Melkor could not get any closer to Fëanor because Fëanor was so arrogant that “he asked the aid and sought the counsel of none that dwelt in Aman, great or small” (Tolkien, 1999: 67). By the fire in his heart and his admiration for the lights of the Two Trees, “he pondered how the light of the Trees, the glory of the Blessed Realm, might be preserved imperishable. Then he began a long and secret labour, and he summoned all his lore, and his power, and his subtle skill; and at the end of all he made the Silmarils” (Tolkien, 1999: 68). This was the most crucial craft that was made on the Earth because “the inner fire of the Silmarils Fëanor made of the blended light of the Trees of Valinor, which lives in them yet, though the Trees have long withered and shine no more” (Tolkien, 1999: 68). Wherefore, “even in the darkness of the deepest treasury the Silmarils of their own radiance shone like the stars of Varda; and yet, as were they indeed living things, they rejoiced in light and received it and gave it back in hues more marvellous than before” (Tolkien, 1999: 68).

Melkor hated Fëanor most as much as envied the Silmarils for both they carried the light of the Trees, and Fëanor approved that although he was an elf, he made the most essential jewellery of the Arda, which was related to the cosmological order of the universe. Moreover, Melkor hated the Trees as much as other things devised by the Valar, which made him further his plans to corrupt the hearts of the Noldor elves. The greediness that captured Fëanor after he had made the jewels so much as he “began to love the Silmarils with a greedy love, and grudged the sight of them to all save to his

father and his seven sons; he seldom remembered now that the light within them was not his own” (Tolkien, 1999: 70). Thus, Melkor had a chance to sow discord in the heart of Fëanor against the Valar by lies:

When Melkor saw that these lies were smouldering, and that pride and anger were awake among the Noldor, he spoke to them concerning weapons; and in that time the Noldor began the smithying of swords and axes and spears. Shields also they made displaying the tokens of many houses and kindreds that vied one with another; and these only they wore abroad, and of other weapons they did not speak, for each believed that he alone had received the warning. And Fëanor made a secret forge, of which not even Melkor was aware; and there he tempered fell swords for himself and for his sons, and made tall helms with plumes of red (Tolkien, 1999: 71).

Thus, the first armament in the Blessed Realm was carried out by the Noldor elves with Melkor’s lies. As a result, the first revolt against the Valar was led by Fëanor: “For Fëanor now began openly to speak words of rebellion against the Valar, crying aloud that he would depart from Valinor back to the world without, and would deliver the Noldor from thralldom, if they would follow him” (Tolkien, 1999: 71).

Receiving the reward for his seeds of discord, Melkor escaped the wrath of the Valar and went to Ungoliant, who had once served him. “[F]rom the hill of Túna the Elves had seen him pass in wrath as a thundercloud” (Tolkien, 1999: 74) since he “could change his form, or walk unclad” (Tolkien, 1999: 76). With the help of Ungoliant, Melkor killed the Trees of Valinor, which was the most tragic event in Arda because these Trees were the source of energy of Arda and a cosmic entity.¹⁹³ By killing them, Melkor tried to cut off Arda’s energy through which all the universe got their life source.

Melkor, who also killed Fëanor’s father, Finwë, left Valinor and fled to Middle-earth by stealing the Silmarils. Upon this, Fëanor named him from that time on as “*Morgoth*, the Black Foe of the World” (Tolkien, 1999: 83). Returning to the ruins of Angband in Middle-earth, Melkor “reared the threefold peaks of Thangorodrim, and a great reek of dark smoke was ever wreathed about them” (Tolkien, 1999: 86). There, he “forged for himself a great crown of iron, and he called himself King of the World. In token of this he set the Silmarils in his crown” (Tolkien, 1999: 86). Having regarded

¹⁹³ The Two Trees of Valinor as Cosmic Tree was discussed in Chapter Two.

himself as the ruler of Middle-earth, Melkor/Morgoth could no longer step into the Blessed Realm. Thereof, “he himself became ever more bound to the earth” (Tolkien, 1999: 113) by being degraded from the order of the Ainur.¹⁹⁴ From the light coming from the Silmarils, he became more and more inclined to earthly materials by ignoring his divine spirit.

It sounds contrast because it was said that Silmarils had the source of energy of Arda. However, Melkor/Morgoth transformed this flowing of energy into a material of iron which was as cold as him. The life source in the Silmarils, in a way, was distracted into a wrong path, which led the way for many other upcoming tragic events. The energy source was blocked with the iron in the crown so that Aman and Middle-earth became lands of dark and shadowy. For instance, the Valar hid their Blessed Realm because of both Melkor/Morgoth’s malice and Noldor’s revolt: “[T]he Hiding of Valinor, the Enchanted Isles were set, and ail the seas about them were filled with shadows and bewilderment” (Tolkien, 1999: 113). “[D]rear and poisonous” (Tolkien, 1999: 123) Angband became the only place of Melkor/Morgoth from which he sent all his armies into Beleriand where the Grey-elves and Exiled elves lived in the First Age. Most of the time, “there were earthquakes in the north, and fire came from fissures in the earth, and the Iron Mountains vomited flame” (Tolkien, 1999: 131). This toxic and poisonous air came to the land of Beleriand through the clouds and mists that Melkor/Morgoth sent.

As a result, Angband was sieged for a second time by the Elves, and in return, “Morgoth devised new evils” (Tolkien, 1999: 131). However, the Elves could not pass Thangorodrim “because of their snow and ice” (Tolkien, 1999: 131). This fact explains why the north was all the time cold because Melkor/Morgoth used ice and snow as an obstruction.¹⁹⁵ The passage below from *The Silmarillion* explains well the dark atmosphere of Angband and Thangorodrim as such:

¹⁹⁴ This issue can also be viewed from what Kocher (1977) states as in the following: “Evil is not a thing in itself but a lessening of the Being inherent in the created order” (67).

¹⁹⁵ Likewise, when Frodo and other hobbits were trapped in Barrow-downs, the “icy touch” that froze Frodo’s bones may refer to Melkor’s archaic connotation with ice and snow (Tolkien, 2004: 140). Kocher (1977) emphasizes this fact as follows: “Tolkien gives the realm of Morgoth an extra level of allusiveness by describing it as so bitterly cold that after its destruction “those colds linger still in that region, though they lie hardly more than a hundred leagues north of the Shire.” He goes on to describe the Forod-waith people living there as “Men of far-off days,” who have snow houses, like igloos, and sleds and skis much like those of Eskimos” (6).

Beneath Ered Engrin he made a great tunnel, which issued south of the mountains; and there he made a mighty gate. But above this gate, and behind it even to the mountains, he piled the thunderous towers of Thangorodrim, that were made of the ash and slag of his subterranean furnaces, and the vast refuse of his tunnellings. They were black and desolate and exceedingly lofty; and smoke issued from their tops, dark and foul upon the northern sky. Before the gates of Angband filth and desolation spread southward for many miles over the wide plain of Ard-galen; but *after the coming of the Sun rich grass arose there, and while Angband was besieged and its gates shut there were green things even among the pits and broken rocks before the doors of hell*” (Tolkien, 1999: 134-5).

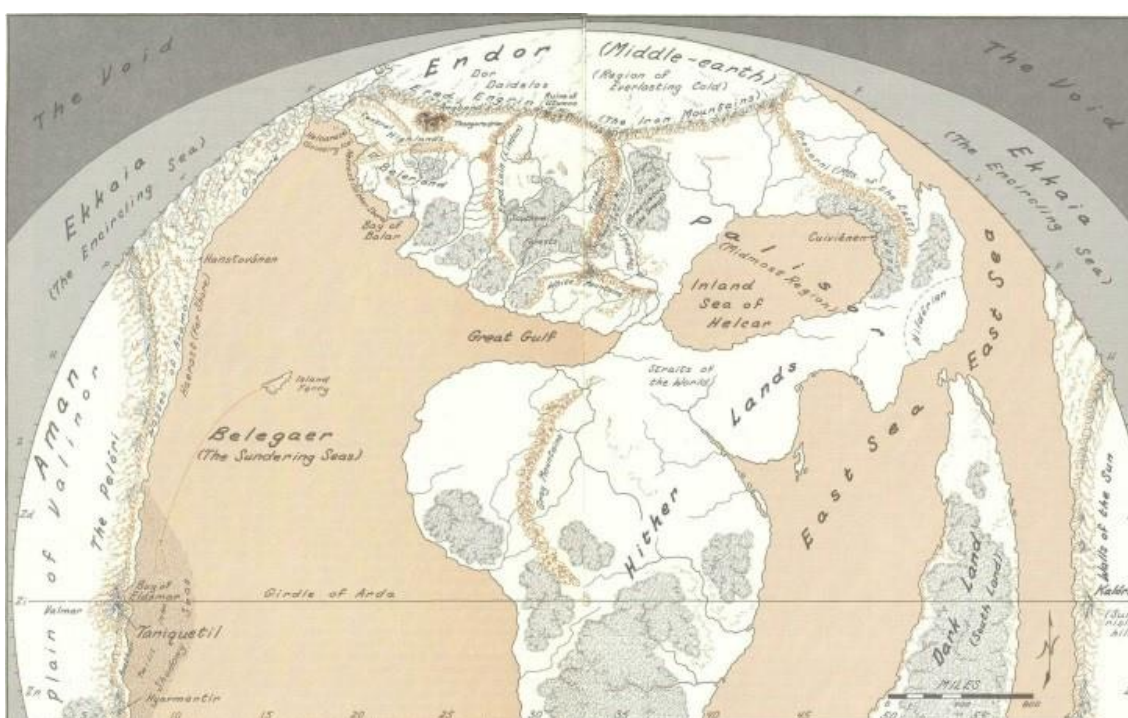


Figure 2 The First Age of Arda (Fonstad, 1991: 4-5).

The quotation describes explicitly the ecological disaster created by Melkor/Morgoth. Although ashes, smokes, and furnaces effused from the mountains, the Sunlight managed to root for the flora of Ard-galen, a land between Angband and Dorthonion in the north. Survival of the green even in the pits and broken lands is very similar to the green bushes grown in the land of Mordor, as discussed in the Second Chapter.

At last, the Valar prepared a war against Melkor/Morgoth, which was the last battle between the powers. After this war, Melkor/Morgoth was captured, and the Valar

destroyed Angband: “Then he was bound with the chain Angainor¹⁹⁶ which he had worn aforetime, and his iron crown they beat into a collar for his neck, and his head was bowed upon his knees. And the two Silmarils¹⁹⁷ which remained to Morgoth were taken from his crown, and they shone unsullied beneath the sky; and Eönwë took them, and guarded them” (Tolkien, 1999: 303). Upon this, the geography of Beleriand changed as in the following: “For so great was the fury of those adversaries that the northern regions of the western world were rent asunder, and the sea roared in through many chasms, and there was confusion and great noise; and rivers perished or found new paths, and the valleys were upheaved and the hills trod down; and Sirion was no more” (Tolkien, 1999: 303).

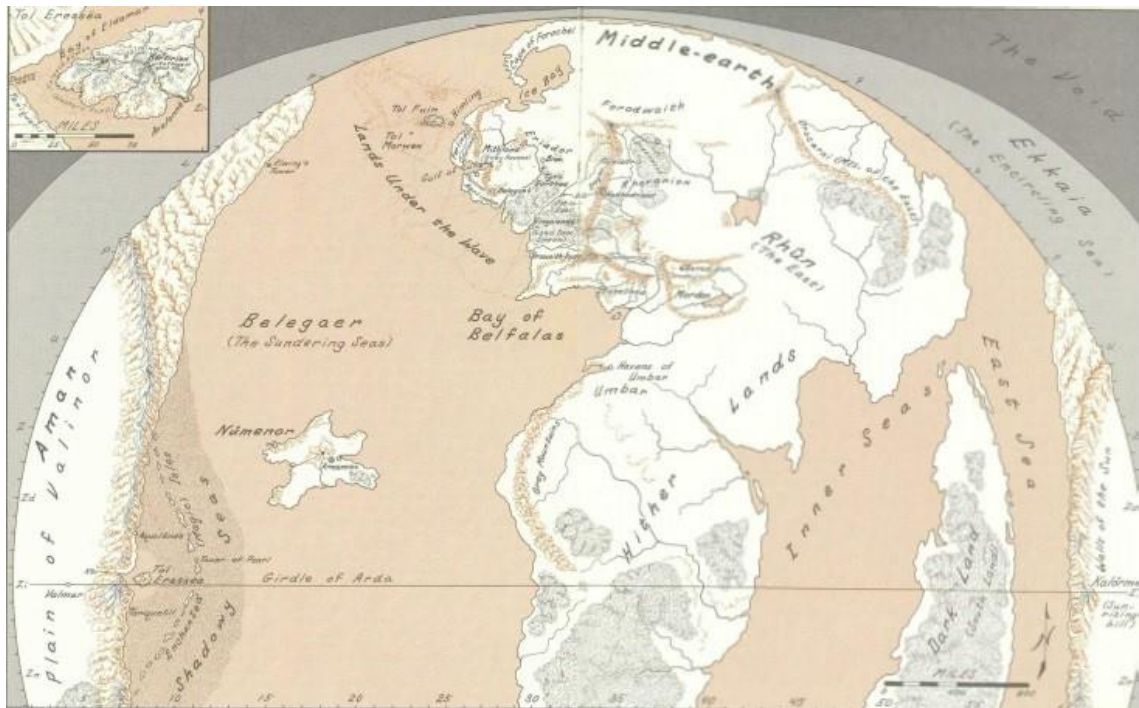


Figure 3 The Second Age of Arda (Fonstad, 1991: 38-9).

Shown in Figures 2 and 3, the northern part of Arda was changed due to the last battle of the Powers, marking the ending of the First Age and the beginning of the Second Age of Middle-earth. Melkor/Morgoth was sent to the Void, and the Silmarils, at last, were saved from him. However, the Doom of Mandos still haunted the Fëanor’s sons, although Fëanor had already been killed by Gothmog, Lord of Balrogs. Thus, Maedhros and Maglor, sons of Fëanor, tried to steal the Silmarils, “[b]ut the jewel burned the hand

¹⁹⁶ It was made by Aulë. It reminds the chains designed by Hephaestus, one of the Olympian gods.

¹⁹⁷ One Silmaril was succeeded to be captured by Beren and Lúthien before.

of Maedhros in pain unbearable; and he perceived that it was as Eönwë had said, and that his right thereto had become void, and that the oath was vain. And being in anguish and despair he cast himself into a gaping chasm filled with fire, and so ended; and the Silmaril that he bore was taken into the bosom of the Earth” (Tolkien, 1999: 305). The same happened to Maglor, which is that “he could not endure the pain with which the Silmaril tormented him; and he cast it at last into the Sea” (Tolkien, 1999: 305). And the first Silmaril, captured by Beren and Lúthien, was safe with Eärendil in the sky. In this way, “the Silmarils found their long homes: one in the airs of heaven, and one in the fires of the heart of the world, and one in the deep waters” (Tolkien, 1999: 305), which means that the blockage put on the Silmarils by Melkor/Morgoth was removed, and the Silmarils began to emanate the energy through the elements of air,¹⁹⁸ water, and earth.

3.3.1. b Sauron

As a Maiar, Sauron became the most known lieutenant of Melkor/Morgoth through all the ages of Arda. In *The Silmarillion*, he was first mentioned as in the following:

¹⁹⁸ Here, Eärendil’s turning into a star should be emphasized. Eärendil was the son of Tuor and Idril and he married to Elwing, daughter of Dior and Nimloth. Dior was the only son of Beren and Lúthien, who captured the first Silmaril from Melkor. As a heritage, the Silmaril was kept by Elwing when Eärendil set sail to the Undying Lands to get help from the Valar against the malice of Melkor. When the sons of Fëanor attacked the Elves in the Mouths of Sirion, Elwing threw herself to the sea with the Silmaril. Ulmo saved her and turned her into a great white bird. Elwing found Eärendil and they sought together Valinor. They reached Aman and they started to live there as High-Elves. Eärendil was the first and the last mortal being who landed on Aman and chose to be an immortal. The Valar put Eärendil’s ship to the heaven and Eärendil journeyed with the ship through the heaven: “Now fair and marvellous was that vessel made, and it was filled with a wavering flame, pure and bright; and Eärendil the Mariner sat at the helm, glistening with dust of elven-gems, and the Silmaril was bound upon his brow. Far he journeyed in that ship, even into the starless voids; but most often was he seen at morning or at evening, glimmering in sunrise or sunset, as he came back to Valinor from voyages beyond the confines of the world” (Tolkien, 1999: 300). Thus, Eärendil turned into a star, which was commonly seen in mythologies as Eliade suggests: “We mention that the Australians, as well as a number of South American tribes, believe that their mythical ancestors were either changed into stars or ascended into the sky to inhabit the sun and stars” (Eliade, 1978: 32). Likewise, Eärendil with the Silmaril on his brow shone in the heaven and “the people of Middle-earth beheld it from afar and wondered, and they took it for a sign, and called it Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope” (Tolkien, 1999: 300-1).

Among those of his servants that have names the greatest was that spirit whom the Eldar called Sauron, or Gorthaur the Cruel. In his beginning he was of the Maiar of Aulë, and he remained mighty in the lore of that people. In all the deeds of Melkor the Morgoth upon Arda, in his vast works and in the deceits of his cunning, Sauron had a part, and was only less evil than his master in that for long he served another and not himself. But in after years he rose like a shadow of Morgoth and a ghost of his malice, and walked behind him on the same ruinous path down into the Void (Tolkien, 1999: 23-4).

Although Sauron appears to be Melkor's successor, he was as destructive as Melkor. Sauron's difference from Melkor is that while Melkor was especially fighting the Valar, which is his equivalent, and the Elves in the First Age, Sauron was the enemy of all in Middle-earth. However, in the First Age, he contributed a lot to his master Melkor/Morgoth in his deeds with developed skills of devilry as such:

Sauron was become now a sorcerer of dreadful power, master of shadows and of phantoms, foul in wisdom, cruel in strength, misshaping what he touched, twisting what he ruled, lord of werewolves; his dominion was torment. He took Minas Tirith¹⁹⁹ by assault, for a dark cloud of fear fell upon those that defended it; and Orodreth²⁰⁰ was driven out, and fled to Nargothrond. Then Sauron made it into a watchtower for Morgoth, a stronghold of evil, and a menace; and the fair isle of Tol Sirion became accursed, and it was called Tol-in-Gaurhoth, the Isle of Werewolves (Tolkien, 1999: 181).

Deduced from the description above, Sauron was known well for his sorcery, which was also the focus point of *The Lord of the Rings*. Like his master, he dwelt in the shadows and created phantoms to deceive the people of Middle-earth. Significantly, he became the master of the werewolves, which became the most fearful beasts of the First Age for the Elves dwelling in Beleriand. These werewolves were the "fell beasts inhabited by dreadful spirits that he had imprisoned in their bodies" (Tolkien, 1999: 192). Mastering of the werewolves may refer to Sauron's power to govern and rule some trapped spirits in Middle-earth for his purposes. In other words, he kept them captive in the bodies of the beasts so that he could govern them and led them to the wars.

¹⁹⁹ The tower watching the Pass of Sirion in the northern part of Beleriand.

²⁰⁰ The son of Finarfin, who is the younger brother of Fëanor.

In addition to this, Sauron mostly changed his shape accordingly, especially to a werewolf: “[H]e took upon himself the form of a werewolf, and made himself the mightiest that had yet walked the world; and he came forth to win the passage of the bridge” (Tolkien, 1999: 205). Taking the form of a werewolf means that he did not only govern the spirits in the werewolves, he also put his spirit into a werewolf, which was the strongest. When Lúthien and Huan went to Tol-in-Gaurhoth to save Beren from the dungeons of Sauron, Sauron sent his werewolves to fight Huan. However, Huan was the strongest, for he was the Hound of Valinor, and he killed all the werewolves Sauron had sent. Upon this, Sauron took the shape of a werewolf: “But no wizardry nor spell, neither fang nor venom, nor devil’s art nor beast-strength, could overthrow Huan of Valinor; and he took his foe by the throat and pinned him down. Then Sauron shifted shape, from wolf to serpent, and from monster to his own accustomed form” (Tolkien, 1999: 205). As can be seen, Sauron took the forms of most archaic monsters or beasts such as serpents or werewolves.

Additionally, at last, he turned himself into a vampire and escaped: “Then Sauron yielded himself, and Lúthien took the mastery of the isle and all that was there; and Huan released him. And immediately he took the form of a vampire, great as a dark cloud across the moon, and he fled, dripping blood from his throat upon the trees, and came to Tar-nu-Fuin, and dwelt there, filling it with horror” (Tolkien, 1999: 206). It is the first time a vampire is mentioned in Tolkien’s mythology, and it is related to Sauron. Apart from Sauron, there is Thuringwethil, who was a she-messenger of Sauron in the form of a vampire. It means that Sauron is the only spirit who could take the form of or turn a spirit into a vampire in this mythos.

Sauron became more potent with the One Ring he forged in secret in the Second Age, and he was very close to winning the war at the end of the Second Age. He also helped the Elves of Eriador to make their Rings of Power:

In those days the smiths of Ost-in-Edhil surpassed all that they had contrived before; and they took thought, and they made Rings of Power. But Sauron guided their labours, and he was aware of all that they did; for his desire was to set a bond upon the Elves and to bring them under his vigilance. Now the Elves made many rings; but secretly Sauron made One Ring to rule all the others, and their power was bound up with it, to be subject wholly to it and to last only so long as it too should last. And much of the strength and will of Sauron passed into that One Ring; for the power of the Elven-rings was very great, and that which should govern them must be a thing of surpassing potency; and Sauron forged it in the Mountain of Fire in the Land of Shadow. And while he wore the One Ring he could perceive all the things that were done by means of the lesser rings, and he could see and govern the very thoughts of those that wore them (Tolkien, 1999: 344).

With the Rings of Power, the Elves aimed to contribute to the goodness and beauty of the creation. Thanks to the Rings, the Elves would have a chance to create a link with their spirits and the material world, which would create a totality. However, Sauron planned to discord this totality by creating a malicious link with his One Ring and the Rings of the Elves. By doing this, he managed to rule the world with a material in which he had put most of his divine power. The possessiveness that corrupted Sauron is related by Kocher (1977) as such:

Here Tolkien is not speaking of the immorality of possessiveness, to be sure, but he is singling it out as the source of an overweening blindness in not seeing the world as we should—separate, free, and independent from ourselves—really the same blindness that underlies Sauron’s lust for domination. The idea that “appropriation” is imprisonment of what is not ours is developed even more clearly in the essay’s [On Fairy-Stories] next paragraph, which describes how Recovery through creative fantasy “may open your hoard and let all the locked things fly away like cage-birds [...] and you will be warned that all you had (or knew) was dangerous and potent, not really effectively chained, free and wild; no more yours than they were you” (57).

Here, Kocher relates what Tolkien mentions error of “possessiveness” in his essay to Sauron’s desire to dominate Middle-earth by creating a Ring of Power. Having a materially powerful thing, Sauron should probably think that he would be the ruler of the world since the Ring’s power would bind all the living and non-living beings under

his dominion. This malicious binding is exemplified by Kocher (1977) to a further issue, which is the domination of nature: “We are not to be like dragons hoarding in our dens as treasure whatever we can snatch from the living world around us. People and things are not meant to be our property; they belong to themselves. These are laws of our nature and theirs” (57). Seeing all organic and inorganic beings as property and assuming himself as the owner of them is the explicit sin and error of Sauron in this mythology.

Additionally, Sauron attacked mostly the biodiversity of this universe by ignoring the worthy contribution of all the beings and their heterogeneous position. His desire was “to turn everywhere into one empire, ruled by one logic in accordance with one Will. The result of this apparent unity, which can only ‘succeed’ by being brutally enforced, would be utter fragmentation and isolation, a barely suppressed war of all against all” (Curry, 2004: 275). This means that Sauron, like his master, was against the creation itself although he was the part of it. His “lifehating power” (Stanton, 2001: 62) nearly succeeded to destroy many flora and fauna in his land, which had been once the vital module of heterogenetic distinctiveness of nature and mythology. Apart from this, he managed to break the holism in which unique beings created a multitude: “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” (Tolkien, 2004: 348).

At the end of the Second Age, Sauron was overthrown by the Last Alliance, namely the alliance of the Elves and Men in Middle-earth. Elrond was in the war, too, and he narrated what had happened to Sauron and his Ring of Power as such:

I was the herald of Gil-galad²⁰¹ and marched with his host. I was at the Battle of Dagorlad before the Black Gate of Mordor, where we had the mastery: for the Spear of Gil-galad and the Sword of Elendil,²⁰² Aiglos and Narsil, none could withstand. I beheld the last combat on the slopes of Orodruin, where Gil-galad died, and Elendil fell, and Narsil broke beneath him; but Sauron himself was overthrown, and Isildur cut the Ring from his hand with the hilt-shard of his father’s sword, and took it for his own (Tolkien, 2004: 243).

However, this does not mean that Sauron was destroyed. He “was diminished,” and his Ring “was lost but not unmade” (Tolkien, 2004: 244). When Sauron regained power in

²⁰¹ The last High King of the Noldor.

²⁰² Founder of Arnor and Gondor.

the Third Age, this time, the Ring was in the hands of Sauron's enemies. From the Council of Elrond, where it was discussed what to do with the Ring, it was decided to destroy it in Mount Doom. The decision was not the one that Sauron expected. When he put himself in the shoes of his enemies, the decision might be made to use the Ring against him. Because if he had been them, he would have done so. Here the difference between evil and good can be understood very well. Since Sauron is evil, he expected the decision of the Council to be made for malicious purposes. The good can put themselves in the shoes of evil and see how they can make evil decisions, but even if an evil puts itself in the shoes of the good, he cannot think well because his heart is blunted by darkness. Edmund Fuller (2004) describes this situation in his article "The Lord of the Hobbits: J. R. R. Tolkien" as follows:

In Sauron's very nature, he is incapable of anticipating the policy adopted by his enemies. He cannot conceive that they would voluntarily relinquish the Ring and destroy it, for it would be incompatible with his nature to do so. Thus, the one move that he does not expect is that they would themselves convey it to his very threshold in an ultimate renunciation and destruction of its powers (22).

As seen in the quotation above, this strategy decided in the Council of Elrond is the most critical factor in defeating Sauron. Entering the enemy's lair and destroying its most important weapon is a courageous and clever strategy. Auden (2004), like Fuller, explains how Sauron's evil constraints his imagination: "His primary weakness is a lack of imagination, for, while Good can imagine what it would be like to be Evil, Evil cannot imagine what it would be like to be Good" (47).

The cosmic war that had been with Melkor in Elder Days continues with Sauron in the Third Age. As Sauron rallies his army for the War of the Ring in Mordor, he prefers night to avoid the winds of Manwë: "Neither man nor orc now moved along its flat grey stretches; for the Dark Lord had almost completed the movement of his forces, and even in the fastness of his own realm he sought the secrecy of night, fearing the winds of the world that had turned against him" (Tolkien, 2004: 934-5). Sauron knows very well that these winds are sent by Manwë and chooses to move in the dark to avoid this. When Sauron comes to an end, it is again Manwë's job to wind the ruins of Mordor:

‘The realm of Sauron is ended!’ said Gandalf. ‘The Ring-bearer has fulfilled his Quest.’ And as the Captains gazed south to the Land of Mordor, it seemed to them that, black against the pall of cloud, there rose a huge shape of shadow, impenetrable, lightning-crowned, filling all the sky. Enormous it reared above the world, and stretched out towards them a vast threatening hand, terrible but impotent: for even as it leaned over them, *a great wind took it*, and it was all blown away, and passed; and then a hush fell (Tolkien, 2004: 949).

In a glorious and noisy collapse, Manwë’s winds clear the air poisoned by Sauron. For the last time, Sauron is overthrown; however, this does not mean that evil is destroyed. It is often emphasized that in addition to evil taking bodily shapes, there are many other evil forms in Middle-earth.

3.3.2. The Ring of Power/One Ring

Besides the evil figures in the legendarium, many other characters or materials can be categorized under the evil subheading due to the impacts they have on faithful beings.²⁰³ One of them is, of course, the Ring of Power, which Sauron forged to rule Middle-earth. For the Ring and Sauron are bound to each other, the Ring is as dangerous as him. Although he transferred much of his power to the Ring, without it, he is still a powerful evil character to the extent of gathering a great army against the Free Peoples of Middle-earth, as discussed before. Likewise, the Ring is powerful all alone without Sauron because of the power that was transferred to it, as Gandalf says to Frodo: “Clearly the ring had an unwholesome power that set to work on its keeper at once” (Tolkien, 2004: 48).²⁰⁴ For it was forged for ill-deeds, it has brought much trouble to its bearers from Isildur to Frodo. The most important feature of the Ring is the invisibility it gives to its wearer. Although this feature significantly protected Bilbo and the dwarves from many dangers during their adventure in *The Hobbit*, one can easily attempt to do things that should not be done under normal conditions because of invisibility. This situation can ruin the person’s nature, spoil the heart and give rise to

²⁰³ What I mean here is the ones who were faithful to the purpose of the creation of Eä.

²⁰⁴ “Note that the symbolic, non-allegorical nature of the Ring is especially important here; it is the wilful exercise of power applied instrumentally to the realization of a single overarching goal. The precise nature of that power – whether primarily economic, religious, political, or whatever mixture of these – is entirely secondary to its intended monism, universalism and homogeneity. The effects of such an enterprise, regardless of the intentions of those who carry it out, are necessarily evil” (Curry: 2004: 275).

evil deeds.²⁰⁵ It is evident that the Ring, which has the feature of extending the life of its wearer in addition to invisibility, does more harm than good, especially as seen in the example of Gollum.²⁰⁶ Wood (2003) thinks the same way as stated in words: “Tolkien suggests that it is evil to be granted never-ending life and the absence of visible, outward existence” (68). It is such a powerful Ring that it affects its wearer and seduces the people around it, called a “despotic magnetism of the Ring” by Wood (2003: 93). There are many characters who pass the test of the Ring, as well as those who succumb to this temptation. The best examples of these two ends can be given as Boromir and Sam. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam starts the adventure as Frodo’s servant; he is the character who is mainly around the Ring and witnesses the destructive effects the Ring leaves on the bearer, namely his master Frodo. However, he is among the few characters who are not affected because “his heart is uncorrupted,” and “he desires nothing other than to serve his master Frodo” (Wood, 2003: 71), as such:

In that hour of trial it was the love of his master that helped most to hold him firm; but also deep down in him lived still unconquered his plain hobbit-sense: he knew in the core of his heart that he was not large enough to bear such a burden, even if such visions were not a mere cheat to betray him. The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command (Tolkien, 2004: 901).

²⁰⁵ This issue is further exemplified by Wood (2003) such as the Ring’s invisibility may refer to Gyges’ magical ring in Plato’s *Republic*: “Glaucou recounts the myth in order to refute Socrates’ argument that the doing of good needs no external threat or reward. Goodness is so inherently satisfying, Socrates insists, that it requires no compensation. Glaucou contends, on the contrary, that the story of Gyges demonstrates what happens when human nature is not constrained. For with his magical ring, Gyges was able to get anything he wanted. He could steal and kill without being caught; he could seduce the king’s wife by getting into her bed without her knowing it; he could even kill the king and ascend the throne himself—all by means of his invisibility” (68).

²⁰⁶ “A mortal, Frodo, who keeps one of the Great Rings, does not die, but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues, until at last every minute is a weariness. And if he often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he *fades*: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the dark power that rules the Rings. Yes, sooner or later – later, if he is strong or well-meaning to begin with, but neither strength nor good purpose will last – sooner or later the dark power will devour him” (Tolkien, 2004: 47; emphasis in original). There is a painful story behind Gollum’s bearing the Ring of Power. Gollum, who was a hobbit himself, got this name because of the effect the Ring created on his own body (the sound he made from his throat). The image of the Ring captivated him so much that he strangled his best friend Déagol to death and believed the Ring came to him as a birthday present. Excluded by his family, Gollum hated sunlight and therefore took refuge in the mountains. Thinking that the Sun should not follow him, Gollum drew the Ring with him into shadow and darkness; however, the Ring had its own will to come out of the shadow for the Lord of the Rings to find it. This was where Bilbo took over. As seen especially in Greek mythology, according to Gollum, the Sun was an all-seeing entity. And likewise, the Ring maker needed the Sun to find it, even though he lived in the shadows. Like the Sun, he had an all-seeing “Eye.”

What keeps Sam away from the seductive power of the Ring is his unspoiled heart and devotion to Frodo. The only thing Sam wants is a garden of his own and the feeling that the effort he will put into that garden will make him feel. In the example of Boromir, however, things move in the opposite direction.

On his way out as a member of the Fellowship of the Ring, Boromir cannot resist the seductive power of the Ring and tries to take it from Frodo by force. Frodo, whom Gandalf warned not to wear the Ring, tries to escape Boromir by wearing it. Realizing his mistake, Boromir tries to find Frodo, but it is too late because he could not pass the Ring test and gave the enemy, namely Sauron, a great advantage. The reason for this is that when Frodo wore the Ring in order to escape, he was watched by Sauron's Eye. Thus, Sauron came close to understanding who the Ring bearer was. Here, it is necessary to add a bracket to Boromir's story because Boromir's brother, Faramir, is subjected to the Ring test like his brother. Unlike Boromir, Faramir is not mistaken and manages to take the Ring's charm away from him. The story of Boromir and Faramir, which is similar to the story of two brothers encountered in many fables and mythological stories, gains approval when Boromir, who is more loved by their father, is sent to the Council of Elrond (Stanton, 2001: 68). As the most beloved child, even though he fails the test, he sacrifices himself for the fellowship and is bid farewell in a funeral ceremony worthy of his glory. On the other hand, Faramir turns into a strong character in the quest of the Ring, while he is expected to fail the test and be punished as a less loved child. Faramir, who releases Frodo and Sam to make the Ring go to Mordor, will also later tell Gandalf that he saw Frodo and Sam, and with this, Gandalf will realize that hope still exists and they have one last chance to overthrow Sauron.

The Ring's heavy burden on the bearers is, of course, much more than the effect it has on those around it. Frodo continues this Ring-bearing quest, which he starts very determinedly, with the help of the members of the fellowship and especially Sam, until the last moment: "At the very apogee of Frodo's holiness and might, however, he is overwhelmed by Sauronic force. Frodo becomes, in fact, a virtual ventriloquist for the coercive evil that invades both his mind and will" (Wood, 2003: 72). While he can reach exactly where it was targeted and complete his quest successfully, Frodo conveys how the Ring has taken over him with these words: "'I have come,' he said. 'But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!'" (Tolkien, 2004: 945). Although this situation seems to be a great disappointment to the

reader, Frodo's abandonment brings Sauron's inevitable end. During his quest, Frodo's sense of pity for Gollum makes this quest completed successfully, and the Ring of Power is destroyed when Gollum bites the finger on which Frodo wears the Ring, which is described by Wood (2003) as such:

The Quest is completed not by Frodo the brave but by the greedmaddened Gollum as he bites the Ring off Frodo's finger and, dancing his jig of joy at the brink of the volcanic fissure, tumbles with it into the inferno. Sauron's voice had warned Gollum that he would go to the fire if he seized the Ring. Yet the prophecy is fulfilled in ways that neither of them could have foreseen, as the Ring finally destroys itself (73).

As Wood points out in the quotation above, although he brings the One Ring to the Cracks of Doom, it is not Frodo who destroys the Ring, but the Ring itself that has impressed Gollum to this degree. Verlyn Flieger (2004) comments on this as follows: "In the final moment, standing at the Cracks of Doom, Frodo succumbs to the darkness within him. He puts the Ring on his finger, claimed by it even as he claims it. The end is inevitable. For man always loses to the monster at last. Frodo is defeated just as surely as Beowulf is" (144).

Looking at the result, as mentioned above, Frodo's defeat also leads to the defeat of the enemy. In Tolkien's religion, evil is always defeated, but this is not something that happened once. For ages, evil is defeated, then a period of peace and prosperity is experienced. During this period, evil finds a new shape and stronghold for itself. Then it gets stronger again and spreads its evil through the world, as Gandalf states: "Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again" (Tolkien, 2004: 51). Although it is unknown what shape evil will take in the Fourth Age of Middle-earth, nobody is sure whether it will find that power again. Unlike Tolkien's legendarium, "[i]n the antique pagan world, evil could be resisted but not overcome, either in this life or the next" (Wood, 2003: 75). Although she agrees with what Wood says, Spacks (2004) claims that man, defeated by the enemy, continues this war in an endless cycle:

In connection with *Beowulf*, Tolkien points out the difference between the Christian imagination and the northern mythological imagination. The archetypal Christian fable, he observes, centers on the battle between the soul and its adversaries [...] In this struggle, the Christian is finally triumphant, in the afterlife if not on earth. But northern mythology takes a darker view. Its characteristic struggle between man and monster must end ultimately, within Time, in man's defeat. Yet man continues to struggle; his weapons are the hobbit-weapons: naked will and courage (54; emphasis in original).

Spacks says that the only weapon at hand is “naked will and courage” in the war that continues in this endless cycle. Nevertheless, this time the good has a weapon greater than will and courage: The One Ring. According to Gandalf, just as the Ring of Power uses its power, other powers are in motion. Forced to leave Gollum to reach its maker, the Ring comes to light by passing to Bilbo, but willpower helped Bilbo not resemble Gollum. At the same time, the greater powers prevent this, as Gandalf mentions:

There was more than one power at work, Frodo. The Ring was trying to get back to its master. It had slipped from Isildur's hand and betrayed him; then when a chance came it caught poor Déagol, and he was murdered; and after that Gollum, and it had devoured him. It could make no further use of him: he was too small and mean; and as long as it stayed with him he would never leave his deep pool again. So now, when its master was awake once more and sending out his dark thought from Mirkwood, it abandoned Gollum. Only to be picked up by the most unlikely person imaginable: Bilbo from the Shire! (Tolkien, 2004: 55-6).

In the rest of this, what Gandalf says can be read as a sign that Middle-earth is not left alone in the Third Age: “Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that maybe an encouraging thought” (Tolkien, 2004: 56; emphasis in original). This “something else at work” which Gandalf speaks undoubtedly represents the Valar living in Valinor. Against the evil plans of the Ring-maker Sauron, the Valar have also been in greater plans to turn it to their advantage in accordance with the purpose of creation of the universe. In this case, in accordance with this plan, one should take this Ring from

Gollum's lair because as long as the Ring remains in Gollum's lair, Sauron will continue to be a threat. The fact that this person is an unexpected one - that is, a hobbit - is in the gods' design because even great power Sauron cannot guess that a hobbit hides the Ring. Although the re-appearance of this "tiny ring of cold metal" (Tolkien: 1976: 76) seems to be in favour of Sauron, it has to happen in order for the Ring to be destroyed.²⁰⁷ However, in this plan, Gollum's contribution is not over. According to Gandalf, Bilbo, who did not harm Gollum despite being invisible while escaping from the goblin-tunnels, also determined the fate of Middle-earth with this pity.

Both material and spiritual bonds created between the Ring and its wearer can be read both in ecological and religious aspects. The wearer keeps the Ring as a precious material, which makes him bound to and possessive of earthly materials. Being an owner of such a precious golden Ring makes the person feel that he owns something that makes him more privileged. For instance, Bilbo does not want to leave the Ring to Frodo because when he keeps it in his pocket, he has a chance to escape the "unpleasant callers" (Tolkien, 1976: 285). Thereof, he continuously checks it out whether it is safe or not. Likewise, Frodo begins to struggle with the Ring from the very beginning as Gandalf states: "You see? Already you too, Frodo, cannot easily let it go, nor will to damage it. And I could not 'make' you – except by force, which would break your mind" (Tolkien, 2004: 60).

The Ring makes the wearer so enchanted that if it is taken from him by force, he will lose his mind. It is how modern people feel when their earthly-bound materials are taken from them. This sense of possessiveness leads each individual to feel to have a right to own whatever they want, although they do not produce them. Even though Sauron forged this Ring, it extends its power beyond its maker and badly affects the other Middle-earth characters. As spiritual bondage, the Ring emanates energy reversed to the one, namely Flame Imperishable of Ilúvatar. As discussed before, this Flame led the way for the energy source of Arda, and all beings carry a part of it. On the contrary, the energy from the Ring reverses this source and tries to fade the life in all the living and non-living beings. While the Flame flows through Arda by creating interdependence, the Ring separates and homogenizes all the beings. The ending of all

²⁰⁷ Sending of the Ring to the Valar is also discussed in the Council of Elrond; however, Elrond rejects this idea by saying as such: "[T]hey who dwell beyond the Sea would not receive it: for good or ill it belongs to Middle-earth; it is for us who still dwell here to deal with it" (Tolkien, 2004: 266). Although they will not receive it, they get involved in the flow of the events as discussed. Another reason for their rejection of the Ring may be that they have become "deus otiosus" in the Third Age.

the wearers – if this energy is not resisted - is the same: they will live longer; they will grow up but never be old, and at last, they will enter to the shadow, namely be a ghost trapped in the world. As a result, the continuity and motion of the cosmogony will break.

Lastly, the Ring cannot be used against the will of its maker, namely Sauron. For the purpose of making the Ring is for ill-deeds, using it as a weapon against the evil creates much more destruction. When Boromir suggests it, Elrond answers as such: “We cannot use the Ruling Ring. That we now know too well. It belongs to Sauron and was made by him alone, and is altogether evil. Its strength, Boromir, is too great for anyone to wield at will, save only those who have already a great power of their own. But for them it holds an even deadlier peril. The very desire of it corrupts the heart” (Tolkien, 2004: 267). What Elrond says reminds the modern age in which the ill-deeds of excessive technology are tried to be cured again by technology. This kind of treatment will do nothing but make things worse.

3.3.3. Nine Riders of Sauron/Ringwraiths

Just as the Ring of Power is a contagious evil created by Sauron, likewise the Nine Riders, consisting of nine Men, are overshadowed by Sauron’s evil: “The Nazgûl were they, the Ringwraiths, the Enemy’s most terrible servants; darkness went with them, and they cried with the voices of death” (Tolkien, 1999: 346). The former glorious nine kings of the Men were deceived by nine Rings of Power forged by Sauron and have become masters of the shadow and unconditional servants of Sauron. Contrary to the life-enhancing feature of the One Ring, Ringwraiths dull the lives of those they encounter with their “Black Breath,”²⁰⁸ (Tolkien, 2004: 173) and drown them in shadows like themselves. However, in the same way that the Ring destroys itself, Ringwraiths cannot go beyond being the victim of their wraiths. It is well explained by Wood (2003) as such:

²⁰⁸ Which is described by Frodo as “venomous breath” (Tolkien, 2004: 195).

The Ringwraiths, for instance, are so called because they are men who have yielded to Sauron for so long they have become entirely disembodied creatures who nevertheless wear cloaks, ride horses, and wield weapons. But their real terror lies in their malice, their Sauronic cruelty and spite. As Tom Shippey has shown, their name is linked to the Anglo-Saxon *writhan*, which serves as the root of our modern words *wraith* and *wreath*. The Ringwraiths are as ghostly as rising smoke, but they are also creatures twisted with anger. For our word *wrath* also derives from *writhan*. Thus does Tolkien teach an important moral lesson through the etymological richness of *Ringwraith*: the deadly sin of wrath knots us in a rage that withers our real substance (36; emphasis in original).

The Ringwraiths, one of the most difficult enemies to defeat in Middle-earth in the Third Age, is also the fellowship's nightmare. Encountering a Ringwraith is tantamount to encountering Sauron, and they are representatives of Sauronic evil's taking shape. The incarnation of evil makes it difficult to overcome because it can enter wherever you are, or make physical contact with you.²⁰⁹ That is why the Ringwraiths are the most significant test of the fellowship. From this point of view, it is striking what Wood (2003) says:

The Nine Walkers²¹⁰ are chosen by Elrond as Middle-earth's answer to the Nine Riders of Sauron—the nine mortal men who, wearing the rings that Sauron made for them, have come totally under his power and thus have been turned into the fearsome Ringwraiths. But while the Nine Riders have been made into vaporous shadows of sameness, the Nine Walkers are a remarkably diverse assemblage of the unlike. They represent all of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth, and they are not united by race or language or class, but solely by their friendship: their abiding love for each other and their common devotion to the Good as it is embodied in the Quest (127-8).

²⁰⁹ These words of Aragorn about the Ringwraiths are quite disturbing: "They themselves do not see the world of light as we do, but our shapes cast shadows in their minds, which only the noon sun destroys; and in the dark they perceive many signs and forms that are hidden from us: then they are most to be feared. And at all times they smell the blood of living things, desiring and hating it. Senses, too, there are other than sight or smell. We can feel their presence – it troubled our hearts, as soon as we came here, and before we saw them; they feel ours more keenly. Also," he added, and his voice sank to a whisper, "the Ring draws them" (Tolkien, 2004: 189). Just as the One Ring is linked to Sauron, so are the Ringwraiths to the Ring. As the Ringwraiths approach, the Ring wishes to be worn of its own accord. When they are surrounded by the Ringwraiths at Weathertop, Frodo feels that some other will commands him to wear the Ring.

²¹⁰ The Fellowship of the Ring.

As Wood points out in the quotation above, the nine Fellowship of the Ring is an answer to the nine Ringwraiths of Sauron. However, this nine-person company does not mean that each one will match. Contrary to the Ringwraiths united in evil, the fellowship (four of which are hobbits), which unites differences, can be said to represent almost all races of Middle-earth. The importance of such a company and serving a common purpose is evident at the end of the Third Age of Middle-earth. Although they do not live in the same land, speak the same language, and have different beliefs, the unification of all races of Middle-earth against a common enemy is a highly mythical situation, which is explained by Wood (2003) as follows:

The four hobbits are already friends, but the other five members of the Company soon join them in an unbreakable circle of faith and trust and solidarity. They are united by their common purpose, by their loyalty to Gandalf as their guide, by their hatred of Sauron and all his pomps, by their desire to preserve Middle-earth from destruction and, increasingly, by their mutual sacrifice and suffering. These qualities are not uniquely Christian, of course, but have their parallels in pagan societies as well (128).

As mentioned in the quotation, the Fellowship of the Ring is composed of different characters and different races. They all come from different parts of Middle-earth; they are tied to a particular country, location, or land. Therefore, this quest is an exile for all. “Their characters are the result of an alchemy between the respective contributions of their native lands, their race, their lineage and their individual personalities” states Bertrand Alliot (2006) in his article “J. R. R. Tolkien: A Simplicity Between the ‘Truly Earthy’ and the ‘Absolutely Modern’” (83). This situation is actually a plan aimed by the evil: To make people move irregularly by removing them from their environment (or locations) and thus disrupting the world’s totality and vitalism. Nevertheless, the erratic movement of these people does not determine that they will not return to the course of restoring balance; because as a result, these nine members manage to restore this balance: “[T]he ring is attracted to its master, the Hobbits to the Shire, the Elves to the land of the Valar and the errant king to his throne - each being to its own setting” (Alliot, 2006: 83).

3.3.4. Ungoliant and Shelob

Ungoliant is an evil creature that appeared almost simultaneously with the Ainur: “The Eldar knew not whence she came; but some have said that in ages long before she descended from the darkness that lies about Arda” (Tolkien, 1999: 76). Ungoliant, who has the form of a spider, is female and collaborates with Melkor/Morgoth, playing a significant role in destroying the Two Trees of Valinor. However, she “disowned her Master, desiring to be mistress of her own lust, taking all things to herself to feed her emptiness” (Tolkien, 1999: 76), and she escaped the Valar. “Thence she had crept towards the light of the Blessed Realm; for she hungered for light and hated it” (Tolkien, 1999: 77); as a result, she is also known as the light absorber. Her creeping towards Valinor and sucking the lights of the Two Trees are the most tragic events of Middle-earth mythology: “[T]heir sap poured forth as it were their blood, and was spilled upon the ground. But Ungoliant sucked it up, and going then from Tree to Tree she set her black beak to their wounds, till they were drained; and the poison of Death that was in her went into their tissues and withered them, root, branch, and leaf; and they died” (Tolkien, 1999: 80). As discussed before, the attack on the Two Trees of Valinor by Ungoliant and Melkor is a kind of assault on the cosmic tree of Arda: “In that hour was made a Darkness that seemed not lack but a thing with being of its own: for it was indeed made by malice out of Light, and it had power to pierce the eye, and to enter heart and mind, and strangle the very will” (Tolkien, 1999: 80). The darkness, from this time on, turned into something which was no more the “absence of light” but an embodied void. Ungoliant spawned after that, fleeing to Middle-earth with Melkor, and many of her heirs terrorized the Ered Gorgoroth.

In *The Hobbit*, the spiders that attacked Bilbo and the dwarves at Mirkwood were descended from Ungoliant. However, what is engaging here is that Bilbo and the dwarves often have an illusion of an Elven feast before being attacked by spiders. In the case of Bilbo, this attack begins when Bilbo is in an illusionary dream:

He was deep in thoughts of bacon and eggs and toast and butter when he felt something touch him. Something like a strong sticky string was against his left hand, and when he tried to move he found that his legs were already wrapped in the same stuff, so that when he got up he fell over. Then the great spider,²¹¹ who had been busy tying him up while he dozed, came from behind him and came at him. He could only see the things's eyes, but he could feel its hairy legs as it struggled to wind its abominable threads round and round him. It was lucky that he had come to his senses in time. Soon he would not have been able to move at all. As it was, he had a desperate fight before he got free. He beat the creature off with his hands-it was trying to poison him to keep him quiet, as small spiders do to flies-until he remembered his *sword* and drew it out (Tolkien, 1976: 153-4).

Gandalf, who gives Bilbo a small sword they found in the trolls' lair, does not realize then that it is an intelligent move because Bilbo kills the spider with this sword, and as in all other events Gandalf saying "I brought him, and I don't bring things that are of no use" (Tolkien, 1976: 97) is proven once again. With this incident, Bilbo, who proves himself for this adventure, goes through an initiation process and turns into a completely different Bilbo:

There was the usual dim grey light of the forest-day about him when he came to his senses. The spider²¹² lay dead beside him, and his sword-blade was stained black. Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person, and much fiercer and bolder in spite of an empty stomach, as he wiped his sword on the grass and put it back into its sheath. "I will give you a name," he said to it, "and I shall call you *Sting*" (Tolkien, 1976: 154; emphasis in original).

Bilbo, who gathers his courage after the first spider killed with his sword, plays the leading role in this attack and rescues the dwarves with the help of the ring, which he found deep in the Misty Mountains in Gollum's lair.

²¹¹ "The spider is regarded in the first place as a lunar manifestation, devoted to spinning and weaving. While the thread is reminiscent of that of the Fates, as the Koran emphasizes, what is woven is of extreme fragility [...] This fragility evokes the fragility of a reality which is no more than illusory and deceptive appearance" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 903-4). This explains the illusions of the Elven-feast the dwarves and Bilbo see in the forest.

²¹² "[T]he spider into a symbol, too, of a higher grade of initiation" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 905).

Shelob, one of Ungoliant's heirs, is also in spider form and female: "[N]one could rival her, Shelob the Great, last child of Ungoliant to trouble the unhappy world" (Tolkien, 2004: 723). She lives in Cirith Ungol, and there she confronts Frodo and Sam as they enter Mordor. Shelob continues her foremother's embodied void as described in the following when Frodo and Sam enter into her lair: "They walked as it were in a black vapour wrought of veritable darkness itself that, as it was breathed, brought blindness not only to the eyes but to the mind, so that even the memory of colours and of forms and of any light faded out of thought. Night always had been, and always would be, and night was all" (Tolkien, 2004: 718). As Bilbo completes his initiation by killing the lesser heirs of Ungoliant with the sword in Mirkwood, Frodo's initiation takes a step further with the same sword as such:

Then Frodo's heart flamed within him, and without thinking what he did, whether it was folly or despair or courage, he took the Phial in his left hand, and with his right hand drew his sword. Sting flashed out, and the sharp elven-blade sparkled in the silver light, but at its edges a blue fire flicked. Then holding the star aloft and the bright sword advanced, Frodo, hobbit of the Shire, walked steadily down to meet the eyes (Tolkien, 2004: 721).

However, Frodo is poisoned by Shelob's needle. To complete the mythological cycle, that Ungoliant sucking the Two Trees in Valinor, production of the Silmarils with the light of those Two Trees, one of the Silmarils turning into a star, and finally a piece of this star in the small bottle Galadriel's gift to Frodo, and with Phial of Galadriel Shelob's defeat have happened over three ages. As seen in both the attack of the giant spiders in Mirkwood and the case of Shelob and, the conclusion that although Ungoliant, who came from ages before, finally devoured herself, her heirs continue to spread fear in the Third Age is "the idea that the struggle against evil is unending" (Stanton, 2001: 78).

3.4. Fall of Men

The fall of Men is a central theme in theology and mythology, let alone Tolkien's legendarium. Generally speaking, men at first have a superior position in the eyes of the supreme deity. After a series of sins or errors, they are punished down to an inferior position. Eliade (1978) interprets this fall as entirely men's fault: "[A]ll that is the result of a series of errors and sins on the part of the ancestors. It is they who

changed the human condition. God has no responsibility in this deterioration of his masterpiece. As he is for post-Upaniṣadic Indian thought, man - more precisely, the human species - *is the result of his own acts* (164; emphasis in original). So, the issue of the fall of men cannot be attributed to cosmocrator's deficiency. It is absolutely about the weakness of the men and their inclination to transgression. They are not content with the things that have been given to them before, and they claim more than they have. The result of this deterioration may either be expelled from the place they lived before or drowned in a flood. "The majority of the flood myths seem in some sense to form part of the cosmic rhythm: the old world, peopled by a fallen humanity, is submerged under the waters" (63), states Eliade (1978).

The first fall of Men is not accounted for in Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*; however, the second fall is accounted in a very detailed way. The result is a disappearance of a class of Men (Númenóreans) out of Arda with the flood created by Ilúvatar. The scene of the flood is accounted as such: "[A]nd a great chasm opened in the sea between Númenór and the Deathless Lands, and the waters flowed down into it, and the noise and smoke of the cataracts went up to heaven, and the world was shaken. And all the fleets of the Númenóreans were drawn down into the abyss, and they were drowned and swallowed up for ever" (Tolkien, 1999: 334). The reason for the disappearance of Númenóreans is that Sauron's evil thoughts poisoned them, and they revolted at the Valar and their creator, Ilúvatar. Sauron achieved to find the weak side of the Men, which is their short lifespan. In other words, the Men are vulnerable to death, unlike the Elves. Although the Elves thought that it was the Gift of Ilúvatar, Men started to think the opposite. In many times, Tolkien tries to explain these different points of view in terms of mortality and immortality. This is a matter that is going to be discussed in the subheading "Questions of (Im)mortality"; however, for now it would be enough that the Númenóreans sailed off to conquer the Undying Lands or the Blessed Realm and to win the gift of immortality which they believed that they had already deserved. This revolt was, of course, returned right by Ilúvatar himself with the scene above quoted. This disaster made Arda a rounded world in order for Men never again to try to reach the Blessed Realm. This event also started the closing of the Second Age in Middle-earth. When it comes to the Third Age, this significant event then becomes a legend:

For already in Frodo's day, 'Gone was the "mythological" time when Valinor (or Valimar), the Land of the Valar (gods if you will) existed physically in the Uttermost West, or the Eldaic (Elvish) immortal Isle of Eressëa; or the Great Isle of Westernesse (Númenor-Atlantis).' These places, and what they represented, were no longer available: "Men may sail now West, if they will, as far as they may, and come no nearer to Valinor or the Blessed Realm, but return only into the east and so back again; for the world is round, and finite, and a circle inescapable – save by death. Only the 'immortals,' the lingering Elves, may still if they will, wearying of the circle of the world, take ship and find the 'straight way,' and come to the ancient or True West, and be at peace." Was this supposed to have been a 'real' shift from a geocentric disc-world to a heliocentric globe, or simply a shift in cosmological perception? The question is misplaced; in the books' true pre- (and post-) modern style, reality and perception cannot meaningfully be separated. In either case, the effect is the same: the seas are now bent and the old 'straight way' gone, and with it all 'straight sight.' (Curry, 2004: 210-11).

As explained in this long but essential quotation, although this event turns into a mythical story by the Third Age, it is important because it caused many perceptions to change geographically. As Curry mentions, although the old straight way was gone, it is a fact that this disaster did not devour the whole Men. Even there were survivors among the Númenóreans, who had stayed faithful to Ilúvatar and the Valar even though their king²¹³ had converted to Sauron's religion. Under the leadership of Elendil with his sons Isildur and Anárion, these survivors escaped in nine ships the wreck of Númenor and sailed off to Middle-earth. There they founded the kingdoms of Arnor (in the North) and Gondor (in the South). This is the approach outlined by Eliade (1958) in the following quote: "[T]he floods that annihilate the old humanity and set the stage for the appearance of the new [...] Men disappear periodically in a deluge or flood because of their 'sins'" (211).²¹⁴

Nevertheless, any other flood or deluge is not recorded until the end of the Third Age, in which Tolkien's writing ends (It is not the end of Arda, indeed). Anyhow, the covenant between the deity and survivors is a usual theme stressed over in comparative religions. For example, in the Gilgamesh epic,²¹⁵ it is said that Ishtar's "azure-blue

²¹³ Ar-Pharazôn.

²¹⁴ Such floods are also present in monotheistic religions that are considered sacred today. However, since the focus of this dissertation is based on the mythologies of ancient times, today's monotheistic religions will not be mentioned.

²¹⁵ The longest Babylonian poem, believed to have been composed of in the 7th century BC.

necklace” is a symbol of the covenant, which she held up “swearing that, as she would never forget these jewels, so she would never forget ‘these days’” (Heidel, 1963: 259). While in Tolkien’s mythology, the survivors continued the genealogy of the Men, in the Gilgamesh epic, the gods re-created fourteen human beings with the help of fourteen women. This new creation requires a reason, which is in the following as such: “The reason for this new creation of human life was not that all mankind had perished in the flood [...] in fact, the fourteen women participating in this act probably were themselves survivors of the flood. The purpose obviously was a speedy repopulation of the earth” (Heidel, 1963: 259-60). As discussed above, Ilúvatar did not destroy the whole Men, so the kingdom of the Men would develop after Elendil and his sons’ generation. It implies that Elendil was the chosen one for the future generations of the Men with his royal blood and high nobleness. As the quotation states, the reason of the gods to re-create fourteen human beings after the flood is so simple that the human population would increase as soon as possible. In the same way, that Elendil and his sons achieved to found their kingdoms in the North and South after a year from the deluge of Númenor implies the fact that there was the divine aim here. Especially with the help of Palantíri,²¹⁶ Elendil and his sons achieved to communicate with each other although they were miles away from one another.

3.5. The Divine Right of the Kings/Aragorn

In Tolkien’s legendarium, the Men coming after the Elves are referred to as the new rulers of the Fourth Age of Middle-earth. However, this does not mean that the Men have not established kingdoms in Middle-earth until the Fourth Age. As discussed above, the greatest kingdom of the Men was the Númenóreans. They were a man lineage blessed by Ilúvatar. As a sign of this, they continued their kingdom for 3287 years on the island of Númenor given to them by the gods. As a continuation, those who passed to Middle-earth after losing their island tried to sustain their lineage in Middle-earth by establishing two separate kingdoms there.

As a descendant of Númenóreans, Aragorn is enthroned as the king of the Fourth Age in this respect and ensures the continuation of this remarkable lineage. However, in the Third Age, especially in the kingdom of Gondor (Arnor was lost), those who take

²¹⁶ Stones of seeing, made by Fëanor in the Years of the Trees. Seven of them were brought to Middle-earth by Elendil.

the throne are stewards,²¹⁷ not kings, because the enemy long dispersed Númenor descendants. Aragorn's ascension to the throne is crucial for both the continuity of the lineage and the succession of divine right.

What divine right means here is that the gods have chosen these kings to rule the people of their kingdom, and as part of the divine order, they become representatives of this dignity in Middle-earth. Wood (2003) interprets this situation as follows:

It becomes ever more evident that Aragorn's kingship is theological as well as political. Since in with elders or bishops or other religious authorities, Tolkien gives spiritual power to his monarchs. This is no anomaly. Medieval kings, ruling by divine right rather than democratic election, were believed to have supernatural powers of healing. Thus does Aragorn heal the wounded Eowyn and Faramir—using both his careful knowledge of herb lore as well as his majestic presence—after they have both been gravely wounded at the battle of Pelennor Fields (140-1).

This divine right that Aragorn possesses is reflected in his character development, as Wood mentions above. Aragorn, who proves to be a faithful member of the fellowship by helping Frodo as best he can in this challenging quest, is perhaps one of Sauron's most feared characters.²¹⁸ After all, his healing power is read as a sign of his divine righteousness: "*The hands of the king are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king be known*" (Tolkien, 2004: 862; emphasis in original). As can be understood from this proverb uttered by the wise-woman of Gondor, one of the most important things to be a king is to have healing power. This healing power can be used here both physically and symbolically. In addition to the characters healed by his herbal remedies (especially

²¹⁷ Dickerson and Evans' (2006) comment on stewardship is noteworthy: "The Anglo-Saxon *stigward* was a host in charge of taking care of the guests of the hall; he was not, however, the king of the hall. Rather, the steward was responsible to a higher authority, namely, the king or chieftain. Later medieval codes required a steward to oversee the agriculture and husbandry of a feudal estate in his lord's absence—a frequent situation, owing to the widely disparate locations of the manors under a feudal lord's *demesne*. Thus the steward's responsibility included an explicit environmental component. In the realm of Gondor in the Third Age of Middle-earth—a realm modeled closely on feudal European civilization—a steward was the one left in charge of a kingdom when a king went on to war. The steward had authority in the king's name until the king returned, but ultimately he was accountable to the rightful king for all his actions" (40-1).

²¹⁸ Aragorn, who confronts the hobbits while waiting for Gandalf to arrive in Bree, is locally referred to as *Strider*. Gandalf does not come but leaves a letter to the owner of the inn. When Gandalf mentions Aragorn in his letter, he uses the words of a song dedicated to him: "The old that is strong does not wither, / Deep roots are not reached by the frost" (Tolkien, 2004: 170). Since the word "frost," which attracts attention in these two verses, evokes Melkor, as mentioned before, it is directly proportional that Aragorn is hated so much by Sauron.

by his usage of the herb *athelas*²¹⁹), Aragorn will heal Sauron's ravaged Middle-earth during his reign. Flieger (2004) also supports this view as follows: "The concept of the king as healer derives from the early Celtic principle of sacral kingship, whereby the health and fertility of the land are dependent on the coming of the rightful king. Where there is no king, or where the king is infirm, the land also will be barren" (133).

The sword Aragorn has with the same divine right is just as important. Aragorn's sword Andúril means "Flame of the West," forged from pieces of Narsil²²⁰ by the Elves in Rivendell. This meaning carried by the sword can refer to that Aragorn's ascension to the throne is legally approved by the gods in the West. For a king, the transmission of a sword from generation to generation is also essential in the initial ritual. Sigurd, who is one of the most important names of Norse mythology, also experiences one of these initial rituals. Sigurd completes this ritual by killing the dragon Fafnir with his sword, obtained by re-forging his father's, Sigmund, broken sword, as described in the famous book *Poetic Edda*.

Lastly, Aragorn's righteous ascension to the throne is also approved by the "discovery of a tree, a silver sapling on the side of Mount Mindolluin. This sapling, as Gandalf explains, is a descendent in the line of the White Tree, Nimloth the fair, from a seedling of Galathilion" (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 132). Galathilion, too, "is the offspring of the fruit of Telperion, the Eldest of Trees whose creation early in the First Age of Middle-earth, in the Spring of Arda, is described in *The Silmarillion*" (Dickerson and Evans, 2006: 132). The quest narrated in *The Lord of the Rings*, in a way, prepares Aragorn to this end. Throughout the journey, his wisdom, courage, serenity, and patience show the fact that he is the true heir of Elendil: "Aragorn took the crown and held it up and said: *Et Eärello Endoreenna utúlien. Sinome maruvan ar Hildinyar tenn' Ambar-metta!* And those were the words that Elendil spoke when he came up out of the Sea on the wings of the wind: 'Out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth I am come. In this

²¹⁹ The same healing effect is provided by Aragorn with the same herb when Frodo is wounded at Weathertop: "'These leaves,' he said, 'I have walked far to find; for this plant does not grow in the bare hills; but in the thickets away south of the Road I found it in the dark by the scent of its leaves.' He crushed a leaf in his fingers, and it gave out a sweet and pungent fragrance. 'It is fortunate that I could find it, for it is a healing plant that the Men of the West brought to Middle-earth. *Athelas* they named it, and it grows now sparsely and only near places where they dwelt or camped of old; and it is not known in the North, except to some of those who wander in the Wild. It has great virtues, but over such a wound as this its healing powers may be small" (Tolkien, 2004: 198). Even the scent of this healing herb, under the treatment of a Man who will become a king, slightly dampens the fearful mood at that moment: "The fragrance of the steam was refreshing, and those that were unhurt felt their minds calmed and cleared. The herb had also some power over the wound, for Frodo felt the pain and also the sense of frozen cold lessen in his side" (Tolkien, 2004: 199).

²²⁰ Sword of Elendil, forged in or before the First Age.

place will I abide, and my heirs, unto the ending of the world.” (Tolkien, 2004: 967; emphasis in original).

3.6. (In)visible Religious Practices

As it can be deduced from the subheadings above, Tolkien’s legendarium is based upon a religious background in terms of its creation, with a supreme deity and angelic powers, namely the gods. However, there is no clear evidence of religious duties practiced by the peoples from different races apart from a few exceptions. Under this subheading, this issue will be discussed with again many references from Tolkien’s legendarium.

As Campbell (2014) discusses “nature” in his article, he does not refrain from touching upon religious issues in Tolkien’s legendarium, which are for sure related with one another. In one of his notes, he proposes that: “Although nature is associated with angelic powers, there is no one clearly defined religious creed in evidence in Tolkien’s legendarium” (443).

The only physical centre of worship can be seen in the time of Númenóreans at the peak of their blissful years, which is called Meneltarma, “Pillar of Heaven.” As discussed before, the Men learned the divinities and especially Ilúvatar from the Elves that dwelled in Middle-earth. However, “[t]he High Elves were exiles from the Blessed Realm of the Gods (after their own particular Elvish fall) and they had no ‘religion’ (or religious practices, rather) for those had been in the hands of the gods, praising and adoring *Eru*” (Carpenter, 2006: 204) states Tolkien. It is an implication that in Middle-earth, the dwellers have been estranged from the spiritual atmosphere of the Blessed Realm. Although these exiled Elves, who lived in Aman once with the Valar, must have witnessed the Valar’s worshipping Ilúvatar, it seems that they have left both the Blessed Realm and their spiritual connection to the gods. As a result, the Men, who did not have a chance to live in the Blessed Realm, may imitate this manner.

Nevertheless, as it was stated above, the Númenóreans had a physical location for worship “- in the centre of Númenór; but it had no building and no temple, as all such things had evil associations” (Carpenter, 2006: 204). Because of Sauron’s wiles, the Númenóreans neglected Meneltarma and the worship of the gods. There is no clear account for what kind of worship it was, yet also in *The Silmarillion* the only information is given as in the following: “But those that lived turned the more eagerly to pleasure and revelry, desiring ever more goods and more riches; and after the days of

Tar-Ancalimon the offering of the first fruits to Eru was neglected, and men went seldom any more to the Hallow upon the heights of Meneltarma in the midst of the land” (Tolkien, 1999: 318). It tells about an offering to Eru or Ilúvatar, which may stand for a harvest festival widely seen in the history of the religions. On the other hand, it does not look like joyous festive days in which all the citizens gather at a sacred place for religious ceremonies/initiations.

Sauron seems to take advantage of the weakness of the Men’s faith in the gods, and Meneltarma was never again used even by the faithful ones as a worshipping place. It turned into Sauron’s physical location for his evil deeds, and there he built a temple: “[Sauron] substituted a Satanist religion with a large temple, the worship of the dispossessed eldest of the Valar (the rebellious Dark Lord of the First Age)” (Carpenter, 2006: 205).

Just as worshipers perform no religious rituals, a few things need to be said from the point of view of Ilúvatar. He created the universe he wanted to create, like many gods in world mythologies, and did not get involved in the rest of the ages except for one or two events. One of these interventions was discussed above in the Man’s Fall. Unformed, Ilúvatar, like “deus otiosus,” preferred to execute some of his divine plans in the background rather than direct intervention. Although Fuller (2004) limits this situation to the Third Age, it is the Valar, not Ilúvatar, which is in the foreground in the Second and First Ages:

In the Judeo-Christian scriptures, God is seen at work in history, taking an initiative, intervening in the affairs of his creatures. Even in the pagan Homeric literature (and in all other primitive literatures) the heroes are seen operating, as in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, with the constant intervention and support of the gods, without which their enterprises and achievements would be impossible. In Tolkien’s Third Age an Ultimate Power is implicit. There is the possibility of Sauron gaining total sway over Middle-earth, but it is clear that there are other realms where his machinations are inoperable. The “Blessed Realm” lies in the mystery of the West, beyond the Sea, and certain characters sail toward it in an image akin to the passing of Arthur to Avalon (23).

As stated in the quotation above, Ilúvatar is symbolically more critical than physical existence. The Uttermost West is the spiritual place for the inhabitants of Middle-earth, whether it is the place of the Valar or the last destination for the Elves. However, even

though he stood in the background, it is possible to see traces of the divine and grand plan at the turning points of the characters, especially in the Third Age. As the source of these plans, Ilúvatar is always in the hearts of the mightiest. Fuller (2004) explains this primary source as such: “In Tolkien’s Third Age, the powers that Gandalf and the High Elves can bring to bear against Sauron clearly are derived from the Prime Source, Who is in some way identified with the Blessed Realm. The great ancient names of men and Elves often invoked are on His side” (23). This situation concerning Ilúvatar is, of course, also valid for the Valar. As mentioned above, the Valar, which was at the forefront in the First and Second Ages, falls back like Ilúvatar in the Third Age. As Stanton (2001) mentions, “[h]ere in the Third Age, they manipulate to an extent, but they intervene mostly through agents such as the Istari, the wizards” (45).

The only activity that can be considered a religious ritual - praying or mentioning the name of a god - belonged to the Elves of Middle-earth. Faced with the threat of a Ringwraith in Woodyend, when Frodo, Sam, and Pippin later stumble upon an Elven company led by Gildor, the first thing they acquire on behalf of the Elves is their song dedicated to Varda: “Gilthoniel! O Elbereth! / Clear are thy eyes and bright thy breath! / Snow-white! Snow-white! We sing to thee / In a far land beyond the Sea” (Tolkien, 2004: 79). This song, a kind of prayer, contains the Elves’ requests from Varda to guide them through Middle-earth. The first word of Gildor to Frodo is a prayer: “May Elbereth protect you!” (Tolkien, 2004: 84). As already mentioned, Varda - Elbereth as her Middle-earth name - is the goddess most often mentioned in the songs and prayers of the Elves, so Frodo calls out to Elbereth every time he is in a difficult situation. Sent from Rivendell to search for, Glorfindel finds Frodo, weakened by a mortal wound from the attack of the Ringwraiths at Weathertop, and the others in a desperate situation. Since the Ringwraiths do not let go, Frodo, after crossing the Bruinen River with Glorfindel’s horse, turns to the pursuing Ringwraiths and calls out: “‘By Elbereth and Lúthien the Fair,’ said Frodo with a last effort, lifting up his sword, ‘you shall have neither the Ring nor me!’” (Tolkien, 2004: 214). Following Frodo’s prayer, the Ringwraiths get drowned in the rising waves of the river. It seems to be a kind of reply to Frodo’s prayer from the gods.

3.7. Questions of (Im)mortality

Apart from the gods, lesser Maiar, and the Elves, all other living beings are vulnerable to death in Tolkien’s legendarium. The question of immortality is a matter

highly discussed between the Elves and the Men. This matter even led the Men revolt against the Undying Lands and experience fall. The mortality of the Men was named as the gift of Ilúvatar by the Elves since they thought that their bodies and spirits left the Earth and they no longer had the burden of it. However, the Elves' lives are bound to Arda because it is "measured by the duration in time of Earth" (Carpenter, 2006: 204). The reason why the Elves care more about Arda than the other peoples in Middle-earth is explained through the Elves' "profound interrelationship with the natural world" in Campbell's article (2014: 436). As Tolkien suggests, they have to "endure with and within the created world, while its story lasts" (Carpenter, 2006: 236).

This matter can also be enhanced in the ecological analysis of the dissertation because "the Elves lament the Earth's hurts intensely as they witness across the ages of time all the environmental damage that has ever been visited upon the land" (Campbell, 2014: 436). What happens to the bodies of the Elves if they are injured is replied by Tolkien stating the fact that they incarnate after the injuries of the bodies are healed. In a way, why the Elves name the mortality of the Men as the gift of Ilúvatar makes sense here, although the eschatology of the Men is not clearly defined. For the Men, mortality was not a gift but a punishment because of their falls. They thought that when the first Men awakened up in the very beginning of the time, they had had the same immortality as the Elves. However, most of them were tricked by Sauron and punished by Ilúvatar as a result. The punishment was the Men's becoming a short-lived race.

Especially the descendants of Númenor made significant progress in medicine, hoping to find a cure for aging due to their mortality. This medical wisdom continued with the people who migrated to Middle-earth and founded the kingdoms of Gondor and Arnor. The continuation of the old lore falls into a situation that often becomes important in Tolkien's universe, which stands out in *The Lord of the Rings* as follows:

For though all lore was in these latter days fallen from its fullness of old, the leechcraft of Gondor was still wise, and skilled in the healing of wound and hurt, and all such sickness as east of the Sea mortal men were subject to. Save old age only. For that they had found no cure; and indeed the span of their lives had now waned to little more than that of other men, and those among them who passed the tale of five score years with vigour were grown few, save in some houses of purer blood. But now their art and knowledge were baffled; for there were many sick of a malady that would not be healed; and they called it the Black Shadow, for it came from the Nazgûl (Tolkien, 2004: 860).

The historical decline of the old lore and its disappearance when not well kept or well transmitted is a sign of evil for the Free Peoples of Middle-earth. As the old lore is forgotten, the battlefields to fight the evil get narrower because the good has the old lore while the wicked have new, original, and modern (or mechanical) ideas.

For the spirits of the Elves are bound to Arda, reincarnation is possible for them in the West. However, the spirits of the Men set out from Arda. As a matter of fact, both their material and spiritual bondage to the world have degraded by time. For instance, at the time of Númenóreans, the lifespan of the Men extended due to their contribution to bringing Melkor/Morgoth down. Therefore, the Kings could choose the time to die. Likewise, Aragorn uses this gift when the exact time comes for him to leave the world.

Lastly, it should be stated that Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus is a mythological story based upon or intertwined with ecology. All the matters discussed under the subheadings should reveal that the universe of Eä exhibits an ongoing movement, flow, and occurrence while preserving integrity and multiplicity. It is seen that while the value of each living and non-living being's place in the cosmological order is preserved, an environment where nature is intertwined with each formation is provided with a heterogeneous approach. From Eru, who provides both the divine power and the energy of the universe with Flame Imperishable, to the herb that provides medical benefits, every cosmological subject contributes to both the purpose of creation and biodiversity. In this sense, both nature and religious concepts formed Tolkien's legendarium as elements based on each other for a common interest.

CONCLUSION

Environmental studies in the literature are fed by various fields and pave the way for interdisciplinary collaboration. The terms “ecology,” “environment,” and “nature” are widely studied in literary texts to uncover the relationship between human beings and the world in which they live. These literary texts present these terms either as themes or topics. Additionally, in many works, these terms have become the “actor.” In other words, they are assumed as living entities and approached as the primary source of inspiration. This kind of inspiration is also valid in Tolkien’s Middle-earth, which has various types of living/non-living, organic/inorganic, and bodily/non-bodily beings within its own limitation.

Likewise, the term religion is another area of the study discussed in various fields. It affects sociology, literature, ecology, and even science. Under the umbrella terms nature and religion, Tolkien’s Middle-earth corpus has been analysed through various ecological and religious approaches. Although it is known that these two terms are highly examined in Tolkien’s legendarium, their inseparable union has been studied from a holistic perspective.

It has been seen that Tolkien’s Middle-earth is suitable to uncover diverse ecological approaches because the depictions of nature, geography, and weather have vitality and uniqueness. Likewise, theology in Middle-earth has often been studied. Nevertheless, this dissertation has excluded theology and tried to focus on its mythological perspective. In other words, Tolkien’s Middle-earth has grounded on a totality within the framework of mythology. Thus, this totality gives the chance to study the events in Middle-earth history within its own limitation, as mentioned before.

In order to utter the thesis statement of the dissertation, nature and religion have had to be clarified. Through the chapters, nature in Middle-earth has been discussed from various perspectives regarding ecological approaches and environmental studies. With these clarifications, nature in Middle-earth seems to be similar to the real world. However, it also has its own motion and vitality. Its living/non-living beings, organic/inorganic beings, and bodily/non-bodily beings are intertwined and bonded. Another significant feature of nature in Middle-earth is that it is also linked to cosmology. In Tolkien’s legendarium, it has been seen that no religious belief could be formed independently of any structure of nature. It has been witnessed that these two proceed together and feed each other along the way. It has been noticed that sometimes

they are intertwined; sometimes they stand side by side but never separate. This situation has progressed in accordance with the purpose of this dissertation. In order to express how nature and religion proceed as an inseparable whole in Tolkien's legendarium and how they intertwine when necessary, ecological and religious theories have been examined first. Then the equivalents of both umbrella terms in this corpus have been discussed. In order to achieve this, a holistic approach to its unique history, races, gods, biodiversity, evil, divine justice, destiny, and eschatology has been followed. At the same time, the connotations of this approach have also been revealed.

When Tolkien's Middle-earth has been analysed from an ecological perspective, and the ideas and discussions in the First Chapter have been applied broadly to races, places, events, characters, plants, and animals in Tolkien's legendarium, it has been revealed that the idea of "possessiveness" further enhances the domination of nature. The attitudes of the inhabitants of Middle-earth towards other beings differ following the purpose of their creation. At the point where biodiversity is significant, it has been determined how this diversity is destroyed under destructive forces, and how "power" is applied to destroy this diversity. It has been observed that the cosmic evil who use this "power" destroy this diversity while also destroying the phenomenon of heterogeneity. This attitude coincides with the fact that human beings position themselves in the centre and name all beings "other" with the Age of Enlightenment. The beings, "othered" by the position of evil in Middle-earth, always oppose it as a revolt against the homogenization of their contribution to cosmic creation. This objection, too, from a posthumanist point of view, points to a holistic approach to the mutual interaction of human beings with other living/non-living beings by human beings' removal from their central position. Thus, it shows that all animate and inanimate beings with the vital energy of Arda contribute to the universe's motion, which is also a requirement of Middle-earth mythology. Moreover, this egalitarian perspective supports the pagan belief in animism. In paganism, it is mentioned that the animist belief provides respect to non-human beings because these beings also have spirits and are believed to be alive. In Middle-earth mythology, this "aliveness" is based on a religious perspective. The Ents, created by a goddess, are tree-like creatures giving this belief a religious dimension.

Apart from this, it has been determined that all the inhabitants of Arda and Middle-earth connect with nature in one way or another. The fact that each of the Valar, the gods and goddesses of Arda, represents a natural element, or that the "spirit," which

is accepted as the fifth element, has contributed to Arda's cosmology with both its ecological and religious dimensions are exemplified in this determination. In addition, the fact that the Elves are bound to the destiny of Arda due to their creation and immortality has revealed that they have both religious and ecological missions in this universe. In addition, the fact that the Elves are horticulturalists can be interpreted as adding a semantic dimension to their mission. After the Elves, the Hobbits, who establish the closest bond to nature, have been analysed together with the Shire, the country they live in. It has been understood that they lead an Arcadian lifestyle and feed on the soil with minor damage. Nevertheless, the characterization of even this "minor" damage as "still harm" by the preservationist Ents has revealed the dilemma often encountered in environmental studies. The limits of this dilemma can be expanded, but in short, it oscillates between not benefiting from nature in any way or using it with minor damage. From this point of view, the problems created by this dilemma can be examined in detail for further studies.

On the other hand, the exploitation of the Men, who have the slightest connection with nature, with the lust for power and immortality, destroys nature and causes them to be punished by the gods. Thus, it has been seen once again that people who have lost their mission in Middle-earth will cause both ecological destruction and cosmological changes. Along with the Men, another race that causes this destruction, the Dwarves, are one of the races that face the cosmic evil the most, although they do not receive immediate punishment in terms of religion. From this point of view, it has been seen that ecological destruction either occurs through exploitation at an advanced level and those who destroy as a result of this dimension suffer from it, or archaic evil is identified with ecological destruction.

To sum up, Tolkien's Middle-earth corpus is suitable for study in terms of both nature and religion. In this doctoral dissertation, in which both terms are studied together, it is clear that this universe created by Tolkien provides both ecological and mythological consistency within itself. In the ecological dimension, it is evident that all existing natural formations and animate/inanimate beings contribute to the creation and beautification of this universe in connection with each other. However, at the same time, cosmic evil tries to disrupt this cooperation in every aspect. From this point of view, it is clear that evil cannot be destroyed at once, it has manifested itself in all kinds of ways throughout the ages, and the steps taken against evil must be united. This aspect and cosmic evil also reminded us to look deeper into Tolkien's mythology. In the cosmic

war of good and evil, it has been seen that each part must act holistically and how evil is fuelled more by feelings of “power” and “possessiveness.” Thus, the extent of the damage caused by these feelings has been revealed. From this point of view, important messages can be drawn from this corpus of Tolkien. These messages can be both ecological and religious. In other words, there must be a way to adapt to the environment and nature and to understand the ecosystem we live in without trying to positioning ourselves outside of it. Likewise, devotion to nature in religious beliefs should not be overlooked. It should not be forgotten that each religious ritual is a tribute to the “Green God.”

Finally, each entity found in Tolkien’s Middle-earth can be studied in more detail separately by different branches of environmental studies. Likewise, religious studies can be extended in this sense.

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