“Speak, Friend, and Enter”

Interracial Friendship in the Works of J. R. R. Tolkien

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Abstract

Den engelske forfattaren J. R. R Tolkien og bøkene *Ringenes Herre* og *Hobbiten* har sidan 2001 og framover fått auka merksemd grunna filmatiseringa av bøkene av regissør Peter Jackson. Filmane og merksemda rundt dei førte til skuldingar mot Tolkien og bøkene hans som rasistiske frå nokre kritikarar og journalistar. Denne oppgåva fokuserer på venskap mellom folk av ulike rasar i bøkene til J. R. R Tolkien, med mål om å syne at både bøkene og Tolkien sjølv fremjar ulikskap og samarbeid mellom ulike rasar. I analysen av desse venskapa kjem det fram ulike aspekt som peikar i den retning at Tolkiens oppdikta verd ikkje er basert på eit rasistisk grunnlag. Han kjem med generelle moralske lærdommar, ofte i tråd med hans katolske tru. Religiøsiteten til Tolkien gjennomsyrar bøkene hans, og eg vil difor referere til hans teori om «sub-creation» til å få fram korleis dette syner seg i venskapa eg tek føre meg. Meir enn noko anna peikar spesielt *Ringenes Herre* i mot at i ei ideell verd, er venskap mellom rasane noko å streve etter. Likevel kan det sjåast på som problematisk at rasane i hans oppdikta verd, Midgard, er ordna i eit hierarki der visse raser er sett på som av høgare status enn andre. I Midgard er det også synlege hierarki med tanke på status, sidan denne verda er basert på ei før-industriell tid. Ved å sjå på venskap som dannast på tvers av desse hierarkia, prøvar denne oppgåva å få fram at hierarkia er Tolkien sin måte å ordne ei kompleks verd på, meir enn ein kritikk mot ei verd der alle er sett på som likeverdige. Ved å skapa ei fantasiforteljing der rasane samlast mot ein felles fiende, og venskap dannast som eit produkt av dette, viser Tolkien liberale idear med tanke på den tida han levde i.

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Capitalisations and Abbreviations

Capitalisation

As Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull note in the "Note on the 50th Annivesary Edition" in my edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, which is an edition from 2007, based on the 50th Anniversary Edition published in 2004, there are still many variations of capitalisation in this book. Words "may change form according to meaning or application, in relation to adjacent adjectives, or whether Tolkien intended personification, poetry of emphasis" (xx). They also wrote that "his [Tolkien's] intent cannot be divined with confidence in every case" (xx). With this in mind, I have chosen to capitalise the words referring to of the names of races, such as Men, Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits etc. throughout my thesis, in order to avoid confusion. Tolkien generally did not capitalise the word Hobbit, but as in my opinion, they should be considered a race in to the same extent as Elves and Men, I have also capitalised this word throughout.

Abbreviations

In the direct quotations referring to the works of Tolkien, I have chosen to use a few abbreviations. These are as follows:

The Silmarillion = Si

The Lord of the Rings = LotR

The Hobbit = Hob

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1.0 Introduction

J.R.R Tolkien is most famous for his long epic The *Lord of the Rings*, published in three volumes in the years 1954 and 1955. It is a fantasy novel consisting of six books that tells the story of the happenings of the Third Age of Middle-earth, that is, Tolkien's invented world. The action of Tolkien's books takes place in this mythical world inhabited by, amongst others, Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits, Wizards, Orcs and Men. His books were written in between and after the two World Wars, but is quite different from the writing typical of the time. As John Garth claims in his postscript to his book *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-earth*, Tolkien's writing "reflects the impact of war" (287), but in a different way than his contemporaries. He fought at the Somme during World War I, and as with every young man who has seen the horrors of war, it made a large impact on his life. Instead of turning to write about the horrors of the trenches, as many did after the war, he turned to his imagined world in order to show war from a different perspective. Instead of leaving the old modes of writing behind, he embraced them, and as Garth notes, he played no part "in the modernist experimentation that took off in the post-war years" (Tolkien, 288). His criticism of the modern world had a different form than that of his contemporaries, but is definitely present in his works. In many ways, there are significant parallels between his imaginary world and ours, and Tolkien's thoughts and ideas about the modern world are, as we will see, embedded in his writing.

The focus of this thesis will be the races of Middle-earth. Tolkien has, as we shall see, been accused of implicitly or explicitly conveying forms of racism in his works, and this introduction will consider that charge in some detail. However, the thesis will go beyond existing discussions by examining the role that interracial friendships play in Tolkien's works. By studying the presentation of these friendships, and the language used to convey them, I will try to show that Middle-earth is not created on a racist foundation, whether intentional or

not. In fact, a study of these friendships will reveal that interracial relationships are at the heart of Tolkien's underlying theological vision for his works. The paper will focus mainly on *The Lord of the Rings*, but will also draw on stories from *the Hobbit* and *the Silmarillion* where relevant. Tolkien expressed his intentions in writing *The Lord of the Rings* in the Foreword to the Second Edition; "The prime motive was the desire of a tale-teller to try his hand at a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times maybe excite them or deeply move them" (xxiii). Clearly, then, the critic must be aware of making simplistic correlations between our world and his complex imaginative creation. In order to appreciate the depth of Tolkien's systematic concern with interracial friendship, it is necessary to discuss a cross-section of the key relationships in the world of *The Lord of the Rings*. I have chosen to discuss four sets of relationships that reveal different aspects of this concern: the friendship of the Dwarf Gimli and the Elf Legolas; the friendship between the Wizard Gandalf and the Hobbits, contrasted with the power-based master/slave relationship between the Wizard Saruman and his army of Uruk-Hai; the fraught and uncertain community of 'ring-bearers' in the encounter between the Hobbits Frodo and Sam and the creature Gollum; and the marriage of the Elven Maid Arwen and the mortal Man Aragorn, hero of the War of the Ring and King of Gondor.

1.1 Racist Charges against Tolkien and his Works

Tolkien's books have since the publication of *the Hobbit* in 1937 and up until today roused great interest among readers all over the world. After the adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings,* and later *The Hobbit,* into motion pictures by Peter Jackson this interest was reignited both in popular culture as well as among scholars. One of the topics that has caused a lot of debate after the success of the film adaptations of the books has been the presence of the dark-skinned evil races opposing the "good" light-skinned ones in his fantasy world. Consequently,

Tolkien has been accused of racism As Anderson Rearick notices in his article, a lot of the critics trying to label Tolkien as a racist have not been taking his books into account, but are rather using elements from the films as evidence for their claims (863). One of these is John Yatt, who wrote in an article in *The Guardian* after seeing Peter Jackson's movie instalment of "The Two Towers", that "The Lord of the Rings is racist. It is soaked in the logic that race determines behaviour". He also stated that "…genetic determinism drives the plot in the most brutal manner. White men are good, "dark" men are bad, orcs are worst of all". This an oversimplification of how Tolkien's world is organized, but it is still an impression that has lingered with many, both in response to the films as well as to the books. Stephen Shapiro agrees with Yatt, and claims that "…the fellowship is portrayed as uber-Aryan, very white and there is the notion that they are a vanishing group under the advent of other evil ethnic groups" (Bhatia). This thesis will work to show that criticism of Tolkien as racist based on such accusations as these, does not take the complexity of Tolkien's Middle-earth into account. In fact, the portrayal of the races convey so much more than just a fight between seemingly "dark" bad guys and "light" good guys.

1.2 Racism in Tolkien's Time

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "racism" is defined as:

> A belief that one's own racial or ethnic group is superior, or that other such groups represent a threat to one's cultural identity, racial integrity, or economic well-being; (also) a belief that the members of different racial or ethnic groups possess specific characteristics, abilities, or qualities, which can be compared and evaluated. Hence: prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against people of other racial or ethnic groups... based on such beliefs (oed.com).

This definition suits the purpose of this paper well, as it is a wide definition, taking the most

important aspects of racism into account. One aspect of it may, however, be queried in relation to Tolkien. What we have to take into account is that racism in Tolkien's time must be seen as different from what we think of as racism today. As Dimitra Fimi explains; “when Tolkien started composing his mythology, it was still entirely legitimate and scientifically acceptable to divide humankind into races with fixed physical and mental abilities” (132). It should therefore not be seen as evidence of racism in itself, that Tolkien invented a world with people of different races, and that each race has inherent characteristics and abilities, making the different races distinguishable from each other. The modern OED definition does refer to this as racism, but it was not viewed as such when Tolkien started composing his mythology. Furthermore, the presence of such races was a stylistic and generic choice in accordance with his fairy-story genre. Therefore, it is important to note, as Fimi does, that:

> Apart from Men, the Elves, Dwarves and hobbits are all human-like and the characteristics they share with humankind are more than those that separate them. Tolkien once explicitly stated that 'of course, in fact exterior to my story, Elves and Men are just different aspects of the Humane' and the same is valid for the other peoples that inhabit Middle-earth. (132)

His races were created in order to show different aspects of human nature, and as I will explain with regard to his sub-creation theory: to show something to his readers, that is more easily conveyed by portraying it in an imaginary world. What might be seen as problematic with Tolkien's Middle-earth with regard to racism is, however, that Middle-earth is highly hierarchical, and on the top of the racial hierarchy we find the Elves (Burns 139-141) and the Wizards. It has been argued that what can be seen in Tolkien's works is an evolution from a certain degree of implicit racism or Eurocentrism in his early works, to an awareness of this in his later works, along with an attempt to counter it (Chism 558). This hierarchical system is thus less visible in *The Lord of the Rings* than in *The Silmarillion*, which despite of being

published later than *The Lord of the Rings*, largely consists of Tolkien's earlier writings. This hierarchical system does not, however, as we will see, inhibit friendships between the "high" and the "low", and interracial relationships flourish in the books. It seems that Tolkien invented these races in order for these relationships to explored in a profound way, dealing with an array of issues that humanity faces.

A belief in a hierarchy of races was also one of the main ideas of the eugenic movement of the early 1900's. Up until after World War II, eugenic ideas flourished in social and national debates. As Frank Dikötter writes in his article on the subject: "Eugenics was a fundamental aspect dof some of the most important cultural and social movements of the twentieth century, intimately linked to ideologies of "race," nation, and sex…" (467). The underlying idea of the eugenics movement was that one could "improve individuals and societies through biological engineering" (Turda 2). The idea was that by improving the people who lived in a society, the society itself would be improved. This resulted in two approaches: positive and negative eugenics. As explained by Diane Paul "…'negative eugenics' would aim at discouraging inferior members of society from having children, and ''positive eugenics'' would encourage the most capable to reproduce early and often" (260). The promoters of negative eugenics worked for sterilization of those seen as inferior, such as people with mental and physical disabilities, alcoholics and criminal. The promoters of positive eugenics advocated the ideas of Francis Galton[1] concerning that:

> …'if talented men are matched with talented women, of the same mental and physical characters as themselves, generation after generation, we might produce a highly-bred human race, with no more tendency to revert to meaner ancestral types than is shown by

[1] The "founder of the eugenic faith" (Turda 19).

> our long-established breeds of race-horses and fox-hounds' (Turda 16).

It can be seen in Tolkien's writing, some ideas that definitely counters the arguments of the eugenic movement. As we will see, especially in chapter three, Tolkien sees all living things as of intrinsic value – this is in accordance with his Catholic faith, as well as his sub-creation theory. The idea, then that some lives are more valuable than others are absurd in his theological vision. Turda notes that, "The Catholic Church...was one [of] the institutions that played a significant role in opposing the introduction of negative eugenic policies" (88). In chapter three I will also look into how it might be argued that the breeding of the Uruk-hai might be seen as a criticism against this movement.

1.2 Defenses against the Racist Claim

Other scholars, as well as Anderson Rearick have taken up the fight in renouncing the racist claim against Tolkien and his books (such as Chism; Fimi; Young; Chance). Like the critics who see racism in Tolkien's works, these scholars also acknowledge the issue "that colors and geography (dark/light, west/east) are linked to good and evil in *The Lord of the Rings*" (Young 353). Helen Young, however, also acknowledges that "to call Tolkien, his works, or the films based on them racist is a serious oversimplification which does not take into account the diversity of the cultures and individuals that are represented" (353). One of the main factors that makes it difficult to brand Tolkien's work as racist is the races' ability to overcome their biases towards each other and unite against a common enemy. Young notes that:

> ...the success of the alliance against evil depends on its diversity as much as it does its unity; racial and cultural differences complement each other, and the traits and abilities of each group contribute to eventual victory over evil. Finding a common ground through a mutual purpose while accepting and even valuing difference are key features of this alliance. (354)

This is one of the concepts that I will be looking at in my thesis, and is one of the main reasons why critics have been defending Tolkien against the racist claims.

The incidents of interracial unity and acceptance of the Other does not, however, answer the question of why the evil side in Tolkien's world allegedly is portrayed as dark-skinned, and the good side portrayed as light-skinned. This is of course an oversimplification, and in reading *The Lord of the Rings*, this picture becomes blurred. The underlying idea in Tolkien's world is that every man, despite race, has free will to choose between good and evil, as Aragorn reminds Èomer that: "Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man's part to discern them…" (LotR 438). Inevitably, some Men, Elves, Hobbits, Wizards and Dwarves turn to evil. In *The Lord of the Rings* alone we see examples of people of such light-skinned races who are by no means completely good, such as Saruman, Gollum, Denethor, Gríma and Boromir. In *The Silmarillion* even Elves, whom Tolkien saw as the highest of beings, turn to evil. For the Orcs, by contrast, there is no free will: "Orcs in the text, despite their few redeeming features such as loyalty to each other […], do not have the freedom of will and agency of other species" (Young 358). The Orcs have been bred to serve the Dark Lord, and as Rearick writes:

> A central error when thinking of Orcs in Tolkien's imagination is to envision them as mortal beings like hobbits and men. However, their darkness is not determined by race but by their alliance with evil. This use of terms like darkness and shade comes from scriptural images. So the battle between light and dark, which runs all through *The Lord of the Rings*, comes from Tolkien's Judeo-Christian mindset (870).

The presence of darkness and shadow when it comes to the servants of evil must be seen as a symbol of the despair and desolation that the evil will bring if it is victorious. Verlyn Flieger explains that Tolkien uses "light and dark as emblems of despair and hope" (11). That the

Orcs are black, and that the evil side is often dark-skinned should not be seen as racism, but rather as a symbol of the intentions of the Dark Lord.

Tolkien himself offers some idea on what his stand was when it came to racist ideologies. In this regard, one of the most commonly quoted letters of Tolkien is his response to a German publishing company in 1938, concerning a German translation of *The Hobbit.* They were asking whether he was of "arisch" origin, and his reply was: "if I am to understand that you are enquiring whether I am of *Jewish* origin, I can only reply that I regret that I appear to have *no* ancestors of that gifted people" (Letters 37). It is clear that he disagreed with the ideologies of Nazi Germany, and he notes in a letter to his publishers that he "should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine" (37). With this he is denouncing not only Anti-Semitism, but explicitly also the racism of Nazi Germany. In his Foreword to the Second Edition of *The Lord of the Rings* he stresses that his works should not be seen as allegorical to the real world and that "many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author" (xxiv). While racism may perhaps be seen as applicable to his works, but, as Tolkien says, this would not be the purposed intention of the author.

1.3 Interracial Friendships in Tolkien's Works

The reason for choosing this focus on interracial friendships for my thesis, came out of my interest in Tolkien and his peoples of Middle-earth. In reading *The Lord of the Rings* it struck me that the friendships between the different members of the Fellowship of the Ring, the nine leaving Rivendell on the quest to destroy the Ring, symbolised the coming together of the races of Middle-earth, and that the stories of these friendships constitute a crucial part of the novel. As mentioned in every biography on Tolkien, friendships played a significant part in

his life. Most famous is his friendship with C.S Lewis, depicted in Colin Duriez's *Tolkien and C.S Lewis: The gift of Friendship,* but as told in John Garth's biography *Tolkien and the Great War*, friendships also played a significant part in his life before and during the Great War. In *The Lord of the Rings*, as well as partly in *the Hobbit,* the significance of friendship and camaraderie in war and moments of great distress is evident. This probably mirrors Tolkien's own experiences, and it is not unlikely that he wanted to show in his mythological world how valuable friendship can be. The friendships portrayed in *The Lord of the Rings* are often interracial ones, and I will show that the presence of these serve to undermine the racist accusations.

My intention will be to show, through an exploration of these interracial friendships, that Tolkien's mythology promotes diversity and friendship between different peoples rather than racism. It is not an unproblematic issue to approach, nonetheless, as Middle-earth is "complex and unpredictable, a fantasy world that reproduces some of the concepts and prejudices of the 'primary' world, while at the same time questioning, challenging and transforming others" (Fimi 159). The works of Tolkien may be seen as both reproducing, as well as questioning and challenging the racist claim, and this is what makes it so complex. By looking at some of the most salient interracial friendships in Middle-earth thoroughly, I wish to uncover the factors that contribute to this.

In my reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, I will focus on aspects of these interracial relationships that have not, it seems to me, been dealt with as thoroughly by previous scholars. My critical approach is thus not merely driven by the question of whether the books can be read as racist or not: it aims rather to recontextualise these claims in Tolkien's broader vision and implicit theology of friendship.

1.4 Tolkien's Theory of Sub-creation

All of Tolkien's writing is based on his theory of sub-creation. Therefore, my thesis will also to some extent, show how this theory relates to some the aspects that I will be looking into. The main ideas behind this theory are expressed in Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-Stories", which was initially written as one of the Andrew Lang lectures, and was presented at the University of St. Andrews in 1939. It deals with the functions of fairy-stories, as well as with what sub-creation should be understood as. What is important to note, when it comes to Tolkien and his theory is his Catholic faith. It influences the all his writing, and as we will see, this influence becomes visible in his portrayal of Middle-earth. Richard Campbell notes that: "The chief principle underlying his theory is an immanently theistic one, in the Judeo-Christian tradition of Tolkien's orthodox Roman Catholic faith" (Campbell 94). This theory is based primarily on the idea that only "God can truly make or create - that is, call something into existence from nothing. Humans can only alter or reshape or reform something that already exists. They cannot create something from nothing. Hence, they are not creators; they are sub-creators" (97). This implies that everything that the human makes, even if it is, as in this case a story or a poem, the ideas of which they are made are derived from God.

That there is some divine power behind the creation of Tolkien's mythology, according to Tolkien himself, is evident as he writes in a letter to Caroline Everett in 1957 that "…the story unfolded itself as it were" (Letters 258). In the same letter he also writes about writing the last volume of *The Lord of the Rings*, telling Caroline that: "…the problem was not so much 'what happened?', about which I was only occasionally in doubt – though praised for 'invention' I have not in fact any conscious memory of sitting down and deliberately thinking out any episode – as how to order the account of it" (258). With this it seems that the story revealed itself to him, and that is was not really his invention. It might then be claimed that the friendships that he created in this Secondary World that he created,

came from ideas that were in origin created by the true Creator. Tolkien sees art as the ultimate worship of God, and that in creating other worlds through Fantasy he can "echo or mirror the act of *creation,* practiced purely and truly only by God, in the act of *sub*-creation" (101). These other worlds are not made just in order to "sub-create", as Tolkien notes that: "And actually fairy-stories deal largely, or (the better ones) mainly, with simple and fundamental things, untouched by Fantasy, but these simplicities are made all the more luminous by their setting" (On Fairy-Stories 147). The fairy-stories, such as his own books deal with issues from the Primary World, and "makes luminous" aspects of this world that are better shown through the use of Fantasy. One of these aspects could be understanding and love of the Other, as shown through interracial friendships in his writing.

1.5 Plot Synopsis

An appreciation of the background of *The Lord of the Rings* and the mythological world Tolkien created is often necessary to understand specific characters and episodes, and also Tolkien's overall theological vision. I have therefore chosen to provide the reader with a synopsis, as a preparation for my detailed discussion of interracial relationships in the chapters to follow.

The Silmarillion, published in 1977, is a collection of Tolkien's works that were published by his son Christopher after his father's death. It tells the story of the creation of Arda, or the Earth, and how the different peoples of Middle-earth came into the world. The world of Middle-earth started as visions presented in a song, The Music of Ilúvatar, or Eru, the One God. Through hearing this music, his Valar or Ainur, who are the offspring of his thoughts, saw before them Arda and all that was to be in it. After the song was over, and the vision gone, some of the Valar were sent to Arda to create there all that had been unveiled to them in the Music. One of the Valar, Melkor (later known as Morgoth), turned evil and tried

to destroy all of the beautiful things that the others had created for the world.

The Elves came first into the world of "the children of Ilúvatar", and are thus called the Firstborn. How they came to life, is not told of, but they were discovered by the Valar first at the very eastern parts of Middle-earth. Because the Valar feared what Melkor might do to the Elves, they urged for them to come to Valinor, the dwelling of the Valar, on the most western part of Arda, apart from the main land. Most of the Elves started to travel west, but only three branches of the Elven families came to Valinor; these are known as the Eldar. The three families, or branches were the Vanyar; who remained forever in Valinor, the Teleri; who remained on the shores of the Undying Lands, and the Noldor; who are also known as the exiles because of the actions of Fëanor and his sons. The Noldor came back to Middle-earth promising to win back the Silmarils that Morgoth had stolen from Fëanor. The Silmarils were hallowed jewels crafted by Fëanor, and they had in them the light of the Two Trees of Valinor that were destroyed by Melkor in the First Age. These trees were, except from the stars, the only sources of light in Middle-earth before the coming of the Sun and Moon. The rest of *The Silmarillion* tells of the coming of Men into the world, the creation of the Dwarves by the Vala Aulë, and the wars of the Elves against Morgoth, and other stories about the Elven dwellings of Middle-earth. In *The Silmarillion*, and in the First Age of Middle-earth, with which it concerns itself, the first meetings and friendships between the different races occur. Therefore it is of interest to my paper, and I will from time to time refer to it in my chapters.

The Hobbit was Tolkien's first published fantasy story, published in 1938. It is mainly a children's book, and the story might often seem similar to a fairy-tale. It tells the story of the Hobbit Bilbo Baggins, who sets out on a quest with a dozen of Dwarves and a Wizard named Gandalf. Their quest is to recapture the lost treasure of the Dwarves, that has been taken by the malevolent dragon Smaug. Their journey brings them through the Misty Mountains, where the Dwarves are captured by Goblins. Bilbo ends up at the bottom of the mountain,

where he finds a golden ring. This ring actually belongs to Gollum, a nasty creature who lives in the darkness under the mountain, feeding on raw fish and the occasional Goblin. Because of his smart wits, and the luck that he has found a ring that will make him invisible, Bilbo is able to get out of Gollum's cave without being harmed. There, he meets up with the Dwarves and Gandalf, and they continue their journey, while being followed by the Goblins. Before they reach the Lonely Mountain, they encounter a ham-shifter, gigantic spiders, the Elves of Mirkwood and Bard of Lake Town. The story ends with the death of Smaug, the repossession of the treasure, and one gigantic battle with a whole lot of Orcs. The trouble with *The Hobbit* with regard to this paper, is that it is a children's book. This means that the portrayals of the different peoples in it, are often quite simplified and hardly nuanced. The Dwarves are portrayed as simply greedy and grumpy, and the portrayals of the Elves are also troublesome. I will however still look into some of the aspects of *The Hobbit*, as it is interesting to see how the portrayals of the races have evolved from this children's book and to the epic of *The Lord of the Rings.* And despite it's troublesome characterisation of the races, there are several examples of interracial friendships in it, that may be useful to look into.

The Lord of the Rings contains the story of The War of the Ring, and according to its narrator, the story is found in some ancient book or manuscript. The story concerns itself with the last part of the Third Age of Middle-earth, and moves a little into the beginning of the Fourth Age. It begins with the discovery that the ring left for Frodo Baggins, by his uncle Bilbo, is in fact the One Ring. The One Ring that Sauron, one of Melkor's helpers back in the First Age, has preserved his soul in, and that he is longing for and searching for. He was destroyed once, but his soul still lingers – though he can never be whole without the One Ring. As Gandalf tells Frodo; it can not be destroyed unless it is brought to the flames of Mount Doom, in the middle of Mordor (the land of Sauron), and cast back into the fires from whence it came. Frodo and his three Hobbit friends; Sam, Merry, and Pippin, leave their home

in the comfortable Shire to go to Rivendell, hoping that someone there will know what to do with the Ring. From Rivendell a Fellowship sets out with the mission to aid Frodo in getting the Ring to Mount Doom. The book handles the struggles of Frodo and his loyal gardener Sam on their way to Mordor, and the fight of the other races of Middle-earth against the forces of evil. The Fellowship consists of the Dwarf Gimli; son of Glóin (one of the Dwarves in Bilbo's company in *The Hobbit*), the Wood-Elf Legolas of Mirkwood; son of Thranduil, master of Mirkwoord (also appearing in *The Hobbit*), Boromir; man of Gondor (son of the Steward of Gondor), the Man Aragorn; son of Arathorn (the heir to the throne of Gondor), the Wizard Gandalf, and the four Hobbits that set out from the Shire. It is in *The Lord of the Rings* that the emphasis on interracial friendships is the greatest among Tolkien's works, and it will therefore be at the core of my discussion.

1.6 Chapter Overview

Following this first introductory chapter the structure and content of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter Two:

Chapter two deals with the peculiar and legendary friendship between the Elf Legolas and Gimli the Dwarf. It deals with the history of estrangement and hostility between their ancestors, as well as the coming together of the races. It looks at the advancement of their friendship and the nature of the friendship between two people of inherent differences. It shows how they are able to overcome their prejudices against one another, and that they thus serve as a symbol of the New Age where friendships between the races are restored. It thus argues that in the portrayal of Legolas and Gimli, Tolkien is trying to show the value of overcoming one’s biases against the Other.

Chapter Three:

The first part of this chapter deals with the friendships between the Hobbits of the Fellowship and the wizard Gandalf. It argues that despite the presence of a racial hierarchy in Middle-earth, true friendships between the "high" and the "low" are possible. This is due to the humility with which the "high" take their responsibility. The second part of this chapter contrasts Gandalf and the Hobbits' humility and love of all living things with Saruman's lack of such. It argues that Saruman's mistreatment of nature and living beings is a display of Tolkien's criticism of the modern technological world. It also argues that the manufacturing Uruk-hai might be seen as a criticism of the eugenics movement and genetic engineering.

Chapter Four:

This chapter concerns itself with what becomes the smaller "Fellowship of the Ring", that is Sam, Frodo and Gollum. It starts by arguing why Gollum can be seen as of a different race, thus making his relationships with Frodo and Sam interracial. The chapter looks into the prejudice that Sam has against Gollum as someone ultimately Other, and at the friendship or connection between Gollum and Frodo. It argues that it is by the force of the Ring, as well as Providence, that this frail Fellowship is able to show mercy towards the Other, and thus succeed in destroying the Ring.

Chapter Five:

In chapter five, the notion of friendship is extended to include the relationship of Aragorn and Arwen. The chapter deal with the issues they are facing, as one is mortal and the other immortal. It explores the way these races portray the eschatology of Middle-earth, and links this to Tolkien's theology. It also argues, as some of the other chapters, that Tolkien sees it essential for each race to accept the limitations that are set upon them by God, such as

mortality and immortality.

In my Conclusion, I try to tie together the arguments that I have made during the thesis, in order to show the effects of Tolkien's interracial friendships across the relationships I have examined. It will also bring out the implications of Tolkien's theological view upon the mythology of Middle-earth, and how this is tied to the interracial friendships within his imaginary world.

2.0 Legolas and Gimli: The Unlikely Friendship between Elf and Dwarf

In Tolkien's novels of Middle-earth, the friendship between an Elf and a Dwarf is seen as an unlikely one. The friendship between Legolas and Gimli in *The Lord of the Rings* is presented to the reader as a famous and legendary instance. The reason for this is that their unique friendship causes Gimli, as the first Dwarf ever, to be allowed to come to Valinor with his Elf-friend. One of the reasons why this friendship seems so unlikely, is their races' different ways of viewing the world. The estrangement of the races in the Third Age also contributes to the uniqueness of this friendship. Critics have rightly pointed out that Gimli and Legolas' friendship is the factor in *The Lord of the Rings* that most profoundly shows that what Tolkien saw as a happy ending was the "restoration of peace and friendly commerce between all peoples" (Kocher 127). Within the Fellowship of the Ring, they serve as representatives of their respective races, and the friendship that evolves between them serves as a wider symbol of what is to come after the War of the Ring is over. The struggle brings the races together against a common enemy, and shows that interracial relationships are possible and mutually beneficial in both Middle-earth and in our own. This chapter will examine the special friendship between Legolas and Gimli, arguing that their highly symbolic relationship tells against accusations of racism in Tolkien's trilogy.

2.1 Elves and Dwarves: Natural Enemies?

Throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, it is mentioned that a friendship between a Dwarf and an Elf in the Third Age is seen as quite unusual, and especially so with Gimli and Legolas. The obvious reason for this is the way Legolas' father treats Gimli's father and his companions in *The Hobbit*. In this early children's tale by Tolkien, the Dwarves are being held captive by King Thranduil, Legolas' father, as they are travelling to the Lonely Mountain. In wanting parts of the treasure of the dragon himself, he does not want to let them go and claim it.

Another reason for the unlikeliness of this friendship between Legolas and Gimli, is that the races are estranged, as a result of several incidents between Elves and Dwarves, often caused by the forces of evil. This was not however, always the case, and in the earlier Ages, friendships between Elves and Dwarves occurred. *The Silmarillion,* as well as the Appendixes of *The Lord of the Rings,* tells of the Noldor Elves who "were great craftsmen and less unfriendly to the Dwarves than the Sindar" (LotR 1082-83). It would thus be more likely for Gimli to befriend an Elf of Noldor heritage, but Legolas is of Sindar heritage (1082). The Noldor were "the Deep Elves, the second host of the Eldar" (Si 415) who travelled west to Valinor during the First Age. The Sindar never went to the land of the Valar, but remained in Middle-earth and dwelt in the woods. The Vala Aulë loved both the Noldor and the Dwarves. He created the Dwarves, and is "a smith and a master of all crafts, and he delights in the works of skill (…). His are the gems that that lie deep in the Earth and the gold that is fair in the hand, no less than the walls of the mountains and the basins of the sea. The Noldor learned most of him, and was ever their friend" (18). Their shared knowledge and love of gems and precious metals, as well as their skills in the creating of beautiful things from these materials, resulted in a certain friendship between the Noldor and the Dwarves in the first Age. Legolas' descendants, the Sindars of the First Age, were and are the people of the woods and they love everything that grows. The Sindar and the Wood-Elves do not care much for Men and Dwarves, who in their eyes have no respect for the growing things. For this same reason did Yavanna[2] urge her husband Manwë[3] to create the Ents after the creation of the Dwarves (41). She wanted someone to look after the woods, as a race that needed wood for their labours was born, and another was soon to come; Men. Despite the fact that Legolas is of a kind who loves the trees, and Gimli of a kind who loves gems and stones, they are able to form a friendship.

[2] Yavanna is one of the Valar, the spouse of Aüle and "the Giver of Fruits. She is the lover of all things that grow in the earth" (Silmarillion 18).
[3] Manwë is the mightiest of the Valar, and "he was appointed to be, in the fullness of time, the first of all Kings: lord of the realm of Arda and ruler of all that dwell therein" (Silmarillion 16).

This seems to come from a willingness to understand the other, and see the world from a different perspective. Their friendship shows how people from different races, with different views and beliefs can get along and build lasting friendships.

The coming of the Ents, and thereby the coming of Treebeard, into Middle-earth was a result of the creation of the Dwarves. It was after Yavanna realized that the Dwarves would "delve in the earth, and the things that grow and live upon the earth they will not heed" and that "many a tree shall feel the bite of their iron without pity" (Si 39) that she urged Manwë to create the "Shepherds of the Trees" (41). The word Ent is not mentioned in the Silmarillion, but it is hard to miss that Treebeard is one of these creatures as he declares to Merrry and Pippin in *The Lord of the Rings* that; "we are tree-herds, we old Ents" (468). Gandalf also speaks of them as "herdsmen" and "the shepherds of the trees" (549), as the Ents return from the destroying of Isengard. It is natural for Treebeard to distrust Dwarves, as he was created for the purpose of protecting the trees from their kind, as well as from Men. Legolas and Gimli's friendship comes as a surprise to him, as the Elves are seen as a kind who cares for all living things, while the Dwarves are in his mind the enemy of the trees. As well as often choosing the woods for their homes, the Elves even began "waking trees up and teaching them to speak (468), and so it is evident that the Elves have a certain love for trees. When Legolas asks Treebeard if he can bring a friend to visit Fangorn one day, Treebeard instantly assumes that this friend is an Elf. When Legolas tells him that it is Gimli that he wishes to bring, Treebeard answers "A dwarf and an axe-bearer! Hoom! I have good will to the Elves; but you ask much. This is a strange friendship!" (585). Treebeard never answers whether he will allow Legolas to bring Gimli into Fangorn, but as he seems to enjoy the fact that Gimli's axe "is not for trees, but for orc-necks" (586), it seems that he approves of Gimli. It may then seem that in this new age, there is a possibility for friendships, or at least friendliness, even between races that have been seen as incompatible. It might be that with this Tolkien is trying

say to his readers, that there is a possibility of peace even between races that have been natural enemies; as a result of war against a common enemy.

2.2 Stories of the Past: Overcoming Differences

At this in the story point Legolas and Gimli's friendship has grown so strong, that Legolas promises that "while Gimli lives I shall not come to Fangorn alone" (LotR 586). His wish to bring Gimli to Fangorn probably comes out of the want to show his friend the places that he deems as the most beautiful upon Middle-earth, and Gimli wants to bring Legolas to the Glittering Caves at Helm's Deep for that same reason. While talking to Legolas of the caverns of Helm's Deep, Gimli seems as almost in a trance, and the beauty of the place seems almost to have changed something in him. Up until this point, there has not been such a stream of words coming from Gimli, but now he rambles on for more than half a page. He keeps mentioning Legolas' name in the passage (on p. 547), as well as repeatedly comparing the beauty of the caves with things that Legolas knows of and holds dear. In telling that the halls of the forest of Mirkwood, Legolas' home, "are but hovels compared with the caverns I have seen here" (547), Gimli is not saying that Mirkwood is not beautiful, but merely trying to see the beauty of the caves Helm's Deep from the Elf's perspective. He compares the "immeasurable halls, filled with an everlasting music of water that tinkles into pools" to "Kheled-zâram in the starlight" (547). In order for Legolas to really understand how high Gimli values the beauty of the caves, he compares it with what is reckoned as a holy place for the Dwarves, namely Kheled-zâram or Mirrormere, where the forefather of Gimli's people was given the crown of Durin, and thereby the right to rule his people. Comparing halls and caves to a lake seems somewhat strange, but it seems that the caves had stones in them, blank and shiny enough to be compared to the still surface of a lake. Gimli exclaims that you can see "gems and crystals and veins of precious ore glint in the polished walls; and the light

glows through folded marbles, shell-like, translucent as the living hands of Queen Galadriel" (547). This simile is striking, as Gimli refers to the woman whose beauty he has already expressed as "above all the jewels that lie beneath the earth" (356). By comparing the vision of the walls of the caves to one of her body parts, he is trying to show Legolas that he also will find the caves beautiful, as he shares Gimli's vision of Galadriel's beauty.

Legolas' respond to Gimli's lengthy depiction of the Glittering Caves at Helm's Deep may be perceived as discriminatory towards the Dwarves. Gimli has been trying to speak Legolas' language, and truly explain the magnificence of this place, which Gimli refers to as "one of the marvels of the Northern World" (LotR 547), in terms familiar to Legolas. Legolas tells Gimli: "But do not tell all your kindred! There seems little left for them to do, from your account. (…) one family of busy dwarves with hammer and chisel might mar more than they made" (548). It seems that he does not trust that the Dwarves will not ruin this place with their hammers and chisels. This implies that even if he has trust in Gimli, it does not mean that all his prejudice against Dwarves has been completely eradicated. It is then evident to Gimli, that despite his efforts of explaining how highly he thinks of the caves of Helm's Deep, Legolas has not quite understood. In order to get Legolas to understand, Gimli again tries to explain with an example from the realm of the Wood-elves:

> None of Durin's race would mine those caves for stone or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be got there. Do you cut down groves of blossoming trees in the springtime for firewood? We would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them (548).

By asking this rhetorical question, and explaining what he would do with the place if he could, Gimli is able to get across to Legolas. It required that Gimli spoke in a manner that one would more expect from an Elf, than from a Dwarf, and Legolas also recognises that "I have never heard you speak like this before" (548). His words are talking of taking care of things, lightening up, blossoming and "glades of flowering stone" (548), rather than "of stone, of

gems, of things that take shape under the hands of the craftsman rather than things that live by their own life" (Appendix F, 1132) which Dwarves are famous for loving. It seems that because of the beauty of the caverns of Helm's Deep, which were not made by Men or Dwarf, Gimli has understood the love of things in their natural form. He makes an allegory of the caves as "glades of flowering stone", in the sense that they are already perfect, as a glade of flowers in bloom, and needs therefore not to be quarried. If this epiphany is a result of his own ideas, or whether it comes as a result of the Elves' influence upon him, is uncertain. It would not be unlikely that the Elves way of viewing the world has had some impact on the Dwarf, as he has been around them and embraced their friendship for some time. Gimli is speaking with a new insight, showing the impact his friendship with Legolas has, as well as his effort to make Legolas understand his way of viewing the world.

Tolkien seemingly constructed Gimli's speech as similar to that of the Elves, in order for the reader to see the influence that Legolas, as well as Galadriel, has on the Dwarf. It is impossible for individuals of any species or race, not to be influenced or affected by those with whom we surround us. This is obviously the case with Legolas the Elf and Gimli the Dwarf as well. They start imitating one another, and at a couple of instances they use the exact same way of expressing themselves to each other. On the outskirts of Fangorn, Legolas is talking of the fact that he could easily and happily have lived in those woods in days of peace, while Gimli is feeling uncomfortable. In response to Legolas' idea that he might have lived there, Gimli answers:

> "I dare say you could. You are a Wood-elf, anyway, though Elves of any kind are strange folk. Yet you comfort me. Where you go, I will go. But keep your bow ready to hand, and I will keep my axe loose in my belt'" (LotR 491).

With this, Tolkien makes it visible that even though Gimli and Legolas have become friends, it does not mean that they understand everything about each other. Gimli still thinks Legolas

is of a strange folk, but despite this, he trusts him, and therefore his words and his presence comforts him. In Helm's Deep before the battle, the situation is reversed. Now we are in a setting where Legolas feels uncomfortable, but where Gimli feels at home: "'This is more to my liking,' said the dwarf, stamping on the stones. 'Ever my heart rises as we draw near the mountains'" (532). In response to Gimli boasting about what he and his kin could do with the place[4], Legolas answers:

> "I do not doubt it. But you are a dwarf, and dwarves are strange folk. But you comfort me, Gimli, and I am glad to have you standing nigh with your stout legs and your hard axe" (532).

Here Legolas is, in a very precise manner, echoing Gimli's way of speaking, showing that he feels the same way about Gimli. They are of different races, and have different ways of viewing life, but still they are able to find comfort in each other, and trust one another. It also shows that both of them are being influenced by each other, and thereby, as we have seen, start to echo each other's language.

It is obvious that Gimli and Legolas value the other's company, and even though they are in grave danger, they are able to lighten each other's spirits. They also both have their domains in which they are able to stay unafraid, and thus serve as beacons of hope for the rest of the company in dark times. In the crossing of Charadras[5], the Fellowship is trapped in a snow storm and all hope seems to have abandoned them. The strength of Aragorn and Boromir, as well as Legolas' ability to walk on the snow gives them hope that they will be able get down from the mountain. As "the storm had troubled him little, and he alone of the Company remained still light of heart" (LotR 290), he is able to give the others hope. Because

[4] Talking of the stronghold of Hornburg and the surrounding Deeping Wall in Helm's Deep; not the Glittering Caves mentioned earlier (LotR 531-32).
[5] One of the peaks of the Misty Mountains, under which lies the Mines of Moria, the old Dwarvish kingdom (LotR 283).

of the strength of Men, and the lightness of the Wood-elf, they are able to prevent being buried in the snow. In places where he can be in touch with air or wood, Legolas seems to prosper. The same can be said for Gimli when in the proximity of mountains and caves. In the same way that Legolas gives hope to the Fellowship upon Caradhras, so does Gimli in the darkness of the mines of Moria. Tolkien notes that "Gimli aided Gandalf very little, except by his stout courage. At least he was not, as were most of the others, troubled by the mere darkness in itself" (311). By showing no fear, the others become comforted, and thus both Legolas and Gimli help the Fellowship maintain at least a little bit of hope in situations that seem quite dark and hopeless, in the same way that they comfort each other.

There is a shift in the second book of *the Lord of the Rings*, where it is evident that Legolas and Gimli has reached a deeper understanding of each other. This seems to happen after the Fellowship's first meeting with the Lady and Lord of Lothlórien. Before this point Legolas sometimes hints toward the fact that the Dwarves have brought sorrow and misfortune upon his people. This is also noticed by Michael W. Maher, as he notes in his article that, "When Gimli and Legolas were about to enter Lórien, a torrent of accusations occurred between the two concerning the past" (228). Calling it a torrent of accusations seems like an exaggeration, but after crossing the stream of Nimrodel, Legolas sings the song of Nimrodel. He will not sing the last part of it, as he deems it too sad:

> "It is long and sad, for it tells how sorrow came upon Lothlórien, Lórien of the Blossom, when the Dwarves awakened evil in the mountains."
>
> "But the Dwarves did not make the evil," said Gimli.
>
> "I said not so; yet evil came," answered Legolas sadly". (LotR 341)

Also before entering Moria, there is almost a discussion of who's fault it is that the friendship between the Elves and the Dwarves dispersed.

> "It was not the fault of the Dwarves that the friendship waned," said Gimli.
>
> "I have not heard that it was the fault of the Elves," said Legolas.
>
> "I have heard both," said Gandalf; "and I will not give judgement now. But I beg you two, Legolas and Gimli, at least to be friends, and to help me". (303)

Despite this there seems to be no malice in either of the two, and the disagreements seem to be rooted mostly in the inability to understand one another. This inability can be a result of ages of separation; and prejudice against the Other as something strange and unknown is almost inevitable. This is unfortunately the case both in Middle-earth and in our world.

Only after the Fellowship's meeting with Galadriel and Celeborn in Lothlórien does a true friendship between Gimli and Legolas really begin to grow forth. After this Legolas often takes Gimli with him when he is away with the other wood-Elves in Lórien, and "the others wondered at this change" (LotR 359). After the company leaves Lórien, the two seem inseparable. It seems then, that something that is said in the welcoming of the Fellowship into Caras Galadhon[6] creates a bond between the two, or at least causes Legolas to cast away his assumptions against Gimli. In my opinion it is Galadriel's ability to put the actions of the Dwarves into a perspective that is understandable for Celeborn, and thus Legolas see things differently as well. By making them see that even the Elves would want to "look upon their ancient homes" (356) if exiled from them, Celeborn and Legolas understand that they cannot blame the Dwarves for the actions that has caused death and need for the Elven race; neither in Moria, nor the Lonely Mountain. According to both Michael W. Maher and Paul H. Kocher it is rather something within Gimli which changes and opens up for a friendship between the Elf and the Dwarf. Maher states that it is "the glance of Galadriel that transforms the Dwarf" (229), and is referring to the passage where Galadriel speaks of the beauty of the places within the old Dwarfish kingdom in the Dwarf's native tongue. The moment of transformation is

[6] The city in Lothlórien, The City of the Trees, where Celeborn and Galadriel dwell (LotR 353).

when: “the Dwarf, hearing the names given in his own ancient tongue, looked up and met her eyes; and it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding” (LotR 356). Gimli understands that the Elves are indeed not enemies, and he becomes able to forget the accusations made against him; and the fact that he had to enter Lórien blindfolded. Kocher also saw that, in Lórien, Gimli learns “to accept the love and understanding that she [Galadriel] offers him and, so learning he outgrows the parochialism of his kind” (106). Galadriel was able to help Gimli see that the Elves are not his enemies, and that they appreciate beauty just as much as the Dwarves., and thus: “The new admiration for Galadriel opens Gimli to a new understanding and liking for Legolas” (Kocher 106). Galadriel’s words makes Legolas and Gimli see each other differently, and the forgiving and conciliating nature of Galadriel makes them see that a friendship between them is possible despite their differences. If Galadriel can forgive the Dwarves for things that happened in the past, which she was there to see, so can Legolas.

How the friendship between the two has evolved, is apparent already when leaving Lórien. There is a general sadness among the Fellowship when leaving Galadriel and Celeborn in Lórien. The account of Gimli's sadness is striking, as he asks Legolas: “Tell, me Legolas, why did I come on this Quest?” (LotR 378). His sorrow is caused by the fact that he has to leave the “light and joy” of Lórien, which he praises as more beautiful than the lands of his “mighty kings beneath the stone” (356), as well as by leaving Galadriel, whom he deems fairer than “all the jewels that lie beneath the earth” (356). Gimli uplifts the land of the people of the Elves above the lands of his kin, and the Lady above the most beautiful things the Dwarves know of. In leaving Lórien he thus proclaims to Legolas that he has “looked the last upon which was fairest”, and that “henceforward I will call nothing fair, unless it be her gift” (378). The gift was three strands of Galadriel’s hair, and as I will explain, this was the most valuable gift she could ever give. He is overcome by sorrow, and his openness about this

seems striking, as Dwarves are not perceived as sentimental types, but rather as “a tough, thrawn race” (1132). He does not seem very tough as he starts to wonder why he came on this quest, wishing he would never have to feel the pain of leaving this place, which may be seen as a sort of paradise: “Torment in the dark was the danger that I feared, and it did not hold me back. But I would not have come, had I known the danger of light and joy. Now I have taken my worst wound in this parting, even if I were to go straight to the Dark Lord. Alas for Gimli son of Glóin” (378). It seems that the idea of “torment in the dark”, a Dwarf would be able to prepare himself for, as this has been the doom of many a Dwarf, and not an unlikely outcome of their quest. That he would find a kind of light and joy that he has never experienced before, only in order to leave it for a quest that will most likely lead them towards evil and darkness; he could never have prepared himself for. Legolas comforts Gimli by telling him that despite their leaving, he will remember the place, and that the leaving is a sign of moral strength: “But I count you blessed, Gimli son of Glóin: for your loss you suffer of your own free will, and you might have chosen otherwise. But you have not forsaken your companions, and the least reward you shall have is that the memory of Lorien shall remain ever clear and unstained in your heart” (378). Again, Legolas comforts Gimli by being optimistic, and making Gimli see the situation from a different point of view. He makes Gimli focus on the positive things; the fact that he has been able to see the beauty of Lórien, which cannot be said by many Dwarves, and that leaving was the right choice with regard to the quest and his companions. This segment shows that Legolas and Gimli already have established a strong friendship, where they are able to express their fears and sorrows to each other, but also encourage and comfort each other.

Despite Legolas' attempt to cheer Gimli up after leaving Lórien, Gimli is not overtly convinced. This is because the nature of the Dwarf makes it impossible for him to retain the memory of Lórien and the Lady of the Woods “ever clear and unstained”, as Legolas

professes. His memory, Gimli declares "is not what the heart desires. That is only a mirror, be it as clear as Kheled-zâram" (LotR 378). This may be the reason why Gimli seems to be more sad to leave Lórien than Legolas. Gimli believes that "Elves may see things otherwise. I have heard that for them memory is more like to the waking world than to a dream. Not so for Dwarves (378-9)". This seems to make him sad, and perhaps a bit jealous of Legolas. Legolas has in this case made an assumption about Dwarves, namely that they have the same capabilities as Elves when it comes to remembering. He is thus not able to understand Gimli's sadness, as he is not familiar with the way the minds of Dwarves function. This shows one of the difficulties the inhabitants of Middle-earth might encounter when dealing with someone of a different race, that you are not accustomed to surround yourself with. Misunderstandings are inevitable when people from different cultures meet and interact, if they have little knowledge of the other's way of living and thinking. Through this conversation between Legolas and Gimli, Tolkien shows some of the difficulties of interracial friendships in the Third Age; mirroring the same difficulties that are seen in our own world. In Middle-earth, these difficulties has emerged as a result of the estrangement and isolation of the races.

2.3 The Estrangement of Dwarves and Elves

One of the factors that might have contributed to the estrangement of Dwarves and Elves in the Third Age, could be the Dwarves' murdering of the Elven lord Thingol during the first Age. What is interesting about this is that greed seems to be the underlying reason for both the Dwarves' troubles as well as the Elves' troubles in the Silmarillion. This greed is in the most cases caused by the Silmarils, the three jewels made by Fëanor that was later stolen from him by Morgoth. Thingol was the Elven lord of Doriath[7] in the First Age, kin to Fëanor, and the father of Lúthien who later married the mortal Man Beren, as told of in chapter 5. Thingol

[7] The kingdom of Melian and Thingol in the forest of Neldoreth, in Beleriand, which was covered by the sea at the end of the First Age ("Index" Si 383, 389).

obtained one of the Silmarils by making Beren steal it from the Iron Crown of Morgoth, promising that: "Bring to me in your hand a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown; and then, if she will, Lúthien may set her hand in yours" (the Silmarillion 196). During this time the Dwarves had entered Beleriand, and had established business friendships with the Elves, but "ever cool was the friendship between the Naugrim[8] and the Eldar, though much profit they had one of the other" (100). *The Silmarillion* tells of the collaboration between the Elves and the Dwarves in the making of the halls of the dwellings of both Finrod, brother of Galadriel, and King Thingol (pages 130 and 101-102). The Elves obviously appreciated the skills of the Dwarves, but seemed not to trust them much, and it is noted in both instances that the Dwarves were "rewarded well". Tolkien emphasises that the friendships between the two races were mainly based on the mutual benefits both races had of this arrangement. However, it is important to note that, in the First Age the Dwarves did aid Men and Elves in the battle against the Dark Lord, Morgoth. Because of the effort of the Dwarves and their skill in war, the Noldor survived (223, 224, 228, 229). In the end, the greed of the Dwarves makes them kill King Thingol in order to get their hands on the Silmaril. Ironically, Thingol also obtained the Silmaril because of greed.

Greed seems to be a feature that both Elves and Dwarves share in *the Silmarillon* as well as in *the Hobbit*, and the source of the evil deeds that led to the estrangement on both sides. It is clear that the Dwarves in the company of Thorin Oakenshield in *The Hobbit,* do not venture to get back the Lonely Mountain only because they have a right to it; they go in search for their "long-forgotten gold" (Ho 18). This greed of the Dwarves, along with a number of other traits, such as their beardedness, whininess and cowardliness, has made critics, and others, associate the Dwarves with Jews. This has led to some issues regarding Tolkien's position to anti-Semitism, and to questions of whether the Dwarves are based on

[8] 'The Stunted People': Sindarin name for the Dwarves (ibid. 414)

anti-Semitic stereotypes of the Jews. Rebecca Brackmann states that the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* are definitely created as to be similar to Jews, while Renée Vink renounces this in her article. Vink argues that Tolkien's Dwarves were at the outset seen "as Norse, reminiscent of the light-shunning, greedy and sometimes malevolent, yet clever and skilled beings from the Eddas" (131), but that after a while, Tolkien started to see the similarities between them and the Jews, and then made the connection. In a BBC interview with Tolkien recorded in 1964, Tolkien stated that; "The Dwarves of course are quite obviously – wouldn't you say that in many ways they remind you of the Jews? Their words are Semitic obviously, constructed to be Semitic" (Vink 123). That Tolkien became aware that his Dwarves could be seen as portraying stereotypical anti-Semitic Jewish traits, both Brackmann and Vink acknowledges. This can be seen as one of the reasons for the difference in portrayal of the Dwarves from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*.

In his letters Tolkien clearly repudiates anti-Semitism, and he is writing positively of the Jews. In answering the German publisher house Rütten & Loening Verlag, on their inquiry of whether he was of aryan origin, he wrote that "if I am to understand that you are enquiring whether I am of *Jewish* origin, I can only reply that I regret that I appear to have *no* ancestors of that gifted people" (original emphasis, Letters 37). This letter, along with another one to Stanley Unwin regarding the same issue[9], was written in 1938, the year after the publication of *The Hobbit.* If, then Tolkien constructed the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* with Jewish traits in mind, this portrayal would not necessarily be negative. The Dwarves in *The Hobbit*, as well as in *The Lord of the Rings* are skilled within their crafts, good merchants, and great warriors; also traits that one could use to denote of the Jews (Vink). In order to dodge a lot of criticism and attention after World War II, Tolkien's portrayal of Gimli in *The Lord of the Rings* is

[9] Where Tolkien writes that: "I do not regard the (probable) absence of all Jewish blood as necessarily honourable; and I have many Jewish friends, and should regret giving any colour to the notion to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine" (Letters 37).

nothing like that of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*, and thus all the attributes that could be seen as anti-Semitic are gone. Gimli's role within the Fellowship and in the War of the Ring also made this alteration necessary, as his greediness would work against the plot.

In *The Hobbit*, the Dwarves are not the only ones portrayed as greedy. Of King Thranduil of Mirkwood, it is told that: "If the elf-king had a weakness it was for treasure, especially for silver and white gems; and though his hoard was rich, he was ever eager for more" (Ho 195). At the same time, though, Tolkien reminds us that the Wood-elves "still Elves they were and remain, and that is Good People" (194). It seems then that it is the greed of the Elves that places them alongside Men and Dwarves in *the Hobbit* and *the Silmarillion*. Elves are then also susceptible to greed, but that does not make them innately bad, is what it seems that Tolkien is suggesting. It is not a quality that Legolas seems to have inherited from his father, and *the Lord of the Rings* does not even suggest that Legolas wants any power or treasure of any kind. Gimli is presented as quite similar to Legolas in this regard. In *the Hobbit*, the Dwarves are presented to the reader as "not heroes, but calculating folk with a great idea of the value of money; some are tricky and treacherous and pretty bad lots; some are not, but are decent enough people like Thorin and Company, if you don't expect too much" (247). Gimli does not seem to fit into this picture, and thus, the Dwarves of *the Silmarillon* and *the Hobbit* are quite different from the Dwarf presented to the reader in *the Lord of the Rings*.

Not even when given the opportunity to ask for a gift from the Lady Galadriel, does the greed of the Dwarves appear in Gimli.

> "And what gift would a Dwarf ask of the Elves?" said Galadriel, turning to Gimli.
> "None, Lady," answered Gimli. "It is enough for me to have seen the Lady of the Galadhrim, and to have heard her gentle words". (LotR 376)

As Galadriel convinces him to name what he desires from her, he asks for neither gold nor

precious stones, as his predecessors might have done, but for a gift that it would seem unlikely for a Dwarf to know the value of. He asks for "a single strand" of her hair, and is given three[10]. Gimli does not either seem to ever wish for the Ring and the power that goes with it. These characteristics he shares with Legolas. With this, they seem uncharacteristic for their respective races, if one looks at the history of their predecessors. In order for Legolas and Gimli to function as the selfless characters that they need to be in order for them to function as the supporting characters that they are in *the Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien needed to construct them as different from their predecessors. Different Dwarves and Elves serve different purposes in the different tales of Tolkien's Legendarium, and therefore there are discrepancies in the way they are presented in the different books. The tales of *The Silmarilion* tells of the mythic past, *The Hobbit* is a children's book, and *The Lord of the Rings* is a heroic or romantic epic. The characters as well as the races had to be presented differently in these novels in order for the books to fit into their respective genre. With Gimli and Legolas, Tolkien uses his characters in order for the story to function, as well as getting his points across, and sometimes this leads to what some may view as inconsistencies. The variety of characteristics within one race may also be seen as a way of making a point about generalizations when it comes to race.

2.4 The Coming Together of the Races

It is evident that one can not instantly know the personalities of Gimli and Legolas just by looking at which race they belong to. It is clear to whomever they meet that one is a Dwarf, and the other is an Elf, and with this certain assumptions are made about their inherent values and characteristics. Many of their characteristics can be guessed just by looking at which race

[10] "In the Elder Days Fëanor asked for the same, and been refused three times, for her tresses were famed for seeming to contain the light of the Two Trees" (Caldecott 56). This is how Fëanor wanted to enshrine the light of the Two Trees into the Silmarils. Gimli is given the strands of hair, even though he is also planning to enshrine them in imperishable crystals.

they belong to. Legolas is an Elf, and thereby immortal. He is fair to look upon, as most Elves are, speaks in a polite manner, and since he is a Wood-elf he loves trees, plants and birds. He has keen eyes, a light step and has great knowledge and skill within many fields. In other matters he does not conform to the expected picture of a typical Elf. The same can be seen with Gimli. Anderson Rearick reveals about Tolkien's work, that "In fact, the central message of his famous work is contrary to the central racist presumption, which is that individuals can be categorized and judged by their physical, racial appearances" (864). This is what Tolkien shows through such characters as Legolas and Gimli, who are presented as having a lot of the features that are expected of them as belonging to their respective races, but at the same time they are individuals with individual features. What Tolkien believes that people should be judged by, seems to be their morals and their personal qualities, as each individual has "the free will obey or disobey the laws of morality" (Kocher 87). The effect this causes is that by reading the novels, the reader is able to see that every individual should be judged by their actions and morals, rather than by their appearances or more importantly, their racial affiliation.

The lack of prejudice that the main characters show against each other despite their difference in races, also enforces this effect, and Rearick notes that "In his journey to become the 'Lockbearer' and 'Elf-friend' Tolkien seems to suggest in Gimli the hope for a coexistence of races more than the dominance of one over the other" (869-870). The friendship of Legolas and Gimli can not be overlooked when reading *the Lord of the Rings*, and that Tolkien meant to say something by creating this friendship between two of what seems as incompatible races in Middle-earth, seems probable. In making Gandalf refer to a past when the races were not estranged, as "'those were happier days, when there was still close friendship at times between folk of different race'" (LotR 303), Tolkien implies that in an ideal world, there will be close friendships between people of different races. The reason for the races' estrangement was the

return of evil into the world in the beginning of the Third Age, and thus the races isolated themselves. This war against evil again gathers the races, and it is in the face of a common enemy that the friendships between Dwarves and Elves are revived, with Gimli and Legolas serving as representatives of their respective races. The Third Age is thus seen as an Age of isolation, but the new Age coming after the Fall of Sauron represents an Age where the relationships between the races are mended. The friendships that evolve during the War of the Ring, are not just temporary ones, but interracial friendships and collaborations continue in the years after the Fall of Sauron. This is especially seen in the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, where the reader is told that Legolas "followed at last the desire of his heart and sailed over the Sea", and that he "took Gimli Glóin's son with him [to Valinor] because of their great friendship, greater than any that has been between Elf and Dwarf" (Apppendix A, 1080-81). Their friendship symbols a new Age where interracial friendships are the norm.

3.0 Wizards, Hobbits and Uruk-hai

In both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, the Wizard Gandalf gets the plot going. He is the one who invites the Dwarves to Bilbo's house in *The Hobbit*, and cajoles Bilbo to come with them on an adventure, despite the very unadventurous nature of Hobbits. The friendship between Bilbo and Gandalf is seen as quite a remarkable one, starting out in *The Hobbit*, and stretching all the way through the sixty years that has passed between that adventure and Frodo's. These friendships between a Wizard, one of the Istari, and several Hobbits are quite unusual. Gandalf cares for all living things, even the smaller and seemingly unimportant Hobbits. On the other hand Saruman the White, leader of the White Council, has come to care little for the creations of God, but instead desires power. Because of this desire he breeds himself a fighting race called the Uruk-hai. They are created merely in order to kill and to serve, and are a result of Saruman's "mind of metal and wheels" (LotR 473). They are quite the opposite of Hobbits, as they are a little and humble folk who try their best to live in peace. Their relationship with Gandalf is based on a mutual interest of the other's well-being, rather than servitude, as with Saruman and the Uruk-hai. This chapter will examine how these two wizards treat the peoples of Middle-earth, as well as nature itself.

The Istari, "it was said among the Elves", "were messengers sent by the Lords of the West [the Valar] to contest the power of Sauron, if he should rise again, and to move Elves and Men and all living things of good will to valiant deeds" (Si 360). They are thus seen as the highest of beings on the face of Middle-earth – even above the Elves. Compared to the Hobbits, the Wizards are on the face of it superior in every way. They are taller, more beautiful, have magical powers and are generally far more knowledgeable and sophisticated. This makes them powerful, with the ability to control others. Saruman uses his powers in order to control the minds of others, as seen especially with the servants he genetically engineers for himself, the Uruk-hai. Saruman rejects the task given to him, unlike Gandalf,

and uses his powers to subjugate others. This leads to his own destruction. Gandalf subordinates himself to the task he is given, and is able to succeed because of the friendliness he cultivates towards other races – especially the Hobbits. This chapter will argue that the racial hierarchies within Middle-earth turn out to exist for the sake of showing that both the "high" and the "low" races are uniquely and distinctively valuable, if they are living in accordance with the tasks given to them.

3.1 Appreciating the "low"

Through the depiction of the friendship between the Hobbits and Gandalf, we get a sense of a closing of the gap between the "high" and the "low". As they travel through Middle-earth, both Bilbo and the Hobbits of the Fellowship are seldom even recognised by the other races. Throughout both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, they are mistaken for being for instance Orcs, Elves, or children. In introducing themselves as Hobbits or Halflings to Men they are mostly met with bewilderment, as Men often seem to believe that Hobbits are mere imaginary creatures from children's tales. This is the case when Gimli, Legolas and Aragorn asks Éomer and his riders of Rohan if they have seen the Halflings (that is, Merry and Pippin who have been taken by a pack of Orcs):

> "Halflings!" laughed the Rider that stood beside Éomer. "Halflings! But they are only a little people in old songs and children's tales out of the North". (LotR 434)

Tolkien scholar Jane Chance recognises in her article "Subversive Fantasist: Tolkien on Class Difference" that "being a Hobbit in a land of Men by nature leads to racial stereotyping and sometimes discrimination" (165). This is caused among others because of the height-difference, as the Hobbits are the size of children, and as the term Halfling literally means "half-man", it is not a wonder that some Men see them as such. Chance also notices that only in the most enlightened and knowledgeable civilizations of Middle-earth, are people able to

recognise and acknowledge the many valuable attributes of the Hobbits. The reason for their low status in the hierarchy of races in Middle-earth is due, it seems, to their foreignness as well as their diminutive stature. As they are unknown to many of the races of Middle-earth, and as they do not appear as great fighters, or as a people of exceeding knowledge of the world, they are quickly assumed inferior. Their foreignness also contributes to an unavoidable hostility against them from some, as Otherness is often faced with fear and scepticism, in Middle-earth as in our world.

Gandalf is one of the most enlightened and knowledgeable creatures residing in Middle-earth, along with the Eldar. He has studied the ways and characteristics of Hobbits. Despite their seeming ignorance of the world around them, he recognizes their worth. By showing us this, Tolkien is trying to tell us something about the worth of the “little people”, both in the literal as well as the metaphorical sense. The idea is that the Hobbits represents the “little people” of our world: ordinary people who live their life in peace, who are not necessarily extremely talented nor extremely rich, and who are not usually written about in history books. Tolkien based the Shire “on the rural Warwickshire area where Tolkien grew up” (A. Campell 407), and the inhabitants of the Shire may be associated with people living in such areas. Tolkien also confirmed that “The Shire' is based on rural England and not any other country in the world...” in a letter to Rayner Unwin in 1956 (Letters 250). What this implies is that the Hobbits and their way of life represents a certain Englishness with their “settled way of life, an almost unbreachable politeness, modesty combined with courage, [and] powerful use of understatement” which “all are thought of by the world at large as things traditionally English” (Stanton 282). Through his presentation of Hobbits and their qualities, Tolkien is saying something about the nature of the ordinary man; capable of brave and courageous deeds, but also susceptible to being corrupted by power.

As Tolkien's legendarium progresses, his literary invention of the Hobbit becomes

more and more complex. Much criticism has been focusing on the maturing of our main Hobbits – that is; Bilbo, Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin - on their journey through Middle-earth. The complexity I am referring to has been there all along; it is just not focused upon until the penultimate chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*. What this chapter, "The Scouring of the Shire", does, is that it revokes the reader's idea of Hobbits as inherently good, and that they therefore will resist any kind of evil to enter their lives. By showing that even this people, who thought "that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-Earth and the right of all sensible folk" (LotR 5), and who spent most of their time "growing food and eating it" (9), can be corrupted by evil, Tolkien shows that even the best of people can be blinded by power. It seems that this is what happened to Lotho Sackville-Baggins, as he claimed himself as Chief of the Shire, and took the shape of a dictator. The influence of Saruman's and his ruffians probably made the situation take a more violent turn than he expected, as Frodo believes that "'Lotho never meant things to come to this pass. He has been a wicked fool, but he is caught now'" (1106). "The Scouring of the Shire" shows that Hobbits, and thereby also ordinary men, are not necessarily good, even though they are at the "right" side of the fight (see Letters 78).

3.2 "With great power comes great responsibility"[11]

On both sides of the fight in *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien has placed a Wizard. Gandalf is central, as a friend of all the races that oppose Sauron. The way the Hobbits perceive Gandalf, influences their friendship with the wizard. As Hobbits "heeded less and less the world outside where dark things moved" (LotR 5), they are unaware of who and what Gandalf really is, and of his importance. This may be due to the fact that the Istari appeared "in the likeness of Men..., old but vigorous, and they changed little with the years, and aged but slowly..." (Si

[11] Uncle Ben in the movie "Spiderman" from 2002. Allegedly first said by Voltaire.

360), and thus do not appear as someone of importance. In the Shire Gandalf is mainly known for his fireworks – and at his arrival before Bilbo's Party, Tolkien notes that to the Hobbits he was "just one of the 'attractions' at the Party" (LotR 25). Even to Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin he is probably most known as merely an old traveller, and for being responsible for Bilbo's adventure to the Lonely Mountain, as told in *The Hobbit*. It seems that Frodo does not fully understand the stature of Gandalf until his first meal in Rivendell:

> "Elrond, as was his custom, sat in a great chair at the end of a long table upon the dais; and next to him on the one side sat Glorfindel, on the other side sat Gandalf. Frodo looked at them in wonder...; and as they sat upon his right hand and his left, Glorfindel, and even Gandalf, whom he thought he knew so well, were revealed as lords of dignity and power" (226).

The Hobbits' perception of Gandalf as a wise and kind old man, rather than a Maia[12] makes the friendship a more symmetrical one based on love and mutual respect, rather than asymmetrically based on awe and worship. That Gandalf is indeed a Maia and Istari, is not made clear in the main body of *The Lord of the Rings*, but in Appendix B we are told that it was said: "that they [the Istari] came out of the Far West and were messengers sent to contest the power of Sauron, and to unite all those who had the will to resist him; but they were forbidden to match his power with power, or to seek to dominate Elves and Men by force and fear" (1084). Gandalf's position within the world of Middle-earth and in the story of The War of the Ring, is somewhat hidden throughout *The Lord of the Ring,* both to the reader, and the Hobbits. His true name is revealed as Faramir quotes Gandalf, when meeting Frodo, Sam and Gollum in Ithilien: "*Many are my names in many countries*, he said. *Mithrandir among the Elves, Tharkûn to the Dwarves; Olórin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten, in the*

[12] "spirits whose being also began before the World", "people of the Valar, and their servants and helpers" (Si 21)

South Incánus, in the North Gandalf; to the East I go not" (original italics, 670). In *The Silmarillion* Olórin is mentioned as "Wisest of the Maiar" (22). The discovery of Gandalf's importance among the nobility of Middle-earth, does not seem to affect the friendship with the Hobbits, though their conception of him has somewhat changed. This is due to Gandalf humility, and his appreciation for all good that lives in Middle-earth.

The highly hierarchical world that Tolkien created in fact shows that it is not always those seen as superior, who accomplish the greatest deeds. Individuals of the more powerful and influential races, no less than the weaker ones, can all have flaws. Even Gandalf makes mistakes; such as believing in Saruman the White to be wise enough not to join Sauron's side, and the decision to try to cross the Pass of Caradhras. Gandalf's humility even makes him admit his flaw, and that he could have acted differently:

> "There I was at fault," he said. "I was lulled by the words of Saruman the Wise; but I should have sought for the truth sooner, and our peril would now be less" (LotR 251).

In both *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien portrays the flaws of Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, Men, and Wizards, but also their valiant deeds in protecting the people of Middle-earth. Importantly, the worst people of Middle-earth, regardless of race, as portrayed by Tolkien, are the ones yearning for power as an aim in itself. Saruman is portrayed as somewhat mad, when Gandalf comes to Isengard to seek aid, and Saruman proclaims that "The time of the Elves is over, but our time is at hand; the world of Men, which we must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see" (259). As Gandalf compares Saruman to "emissaries sent from Mordor to deceive the ignorant" (259), the reader is shown that the power and domination over others that Saruman seeks are the devices of evil. As someone on top of the racial hierarchy of Middle-earth, and sent by the Valar, Saruman and Gandalf have more power than most others. This power is given to them in order for them to do good, but for

Saruman the power goes to his head, and instead of using the power as the gift it is, he uses it to do the exact opposite of what was intended. Because of his greed and desire to rule over others (probably a consequence of the influence of Sauron[13]), he, like many great leaders from the history of our own world, is corrupted by the idea of power. Tolkien expresses his thoughts on this in a letter to his son Christopher, saying that: "the most improper job of any man, even saints (who at any rate were at least unwilling to take it on), is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity" (64). Gandalf, as opposed to Saruman, takes his responsibilities and power with humility in order to do good. He does not boss others around, like Saruman, and seems unwilling to do so unless necessary. It becomes apparent that greed, wanting to control others, and bowing to the control of others are seen as the main weaknesses in Tolkien's world. However, his books examine the difficulties of resisting these temptations, and shows that the good in the world all rests on the moral choices of each individual.

Arguably, Tolkien created the different races of Middle-earth in order to show that despite our outward differences, we all share some inherent qualities. Rather than just focusing on the factors that separate the races, he also tried to show what binds 'them', and therefore also 'us' together. Dimitra Fimi notes that "Tolkien once explicitly stated that 'of course, in fact exterior to my story, Elves and Men are just different aspects of the Humane' and the same is valid for the other peoples that inhabit Middle-earth" (132). What separates the people of Middle-earth is their morals, and thereby whether they are prone to fight evil, or succumb to it. Both Gandalf and the Hobbits of the Fellowship are doing what they perceive as right, both out of self-interest, as well as out of selflessness. The Hobbits' love of their home makes them want to help protect it against evil, both for themselves, and for their fellow

[13] Through the use of a *palantír*: seeing-stones, made "to see far off, and to converse in thought" (LotR 598) with others who also had such stones. Saruman had one, and so did Sauron.

Hobbits. Gandalf's mission on Middle-earth is to "contest the power of Sauron" (Si 360), and help the peoples of Middle-earth in defeating him. But in completing his mission, he must return to Valinor, and leave behind the creatures that he loves. All the races of Middle-earth seems to have been given a kind of mission, or some kind of gift, which separates them from the other races. The Elves are given immortality and artistic skills, while Men are given mortality, Dwarves are given crafting skills and a passion for gold, and the Istari are given a mission upon Middle-earth. All these "gifts" say something about the inherent nature of each race, but it also limits the individuals of each race. Living in accordance with the gifts given to you and using them in order to do good is a one of the main ideals in the mythological world of Middle-earth. As every race has free will, this also poses as a "test", not to try to transcend the limitations of your race. This is what happens to the Men of Numenór in their want for immortality, as well as with the Dwarves in their excessive greed and want of Mithril – and thereby leads to tragic ends for both the Men and the Dwarves. Saruman is also one of those who refuses to act according to his purpose, but rather perverts his mission, and is punished accordingly.

Their willingness to make sacrifices shows the goodness of both the Hobbits and Gandalf. Tolkien stresses, according to Paul Kocher that "the laws of morality... bind all free peoples, and do not vary with place or time. These laws... all intelligent races, retain free will to obey or disobey" (87). The reality of free will is thus a fundamental element in Tolkien's mythology, and it becomes evident that "Tolkien, of course, has no doubt that evil is the result of free decisions by a created nature that was good at the outset" (Caldecott 79). This implies that no matter which race you belong to, each individual has the freedom to choose whether to act according to the laws of morality or not, and that none of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth are inherently evil. Aragorn reminds Éomer of this, as they meet on the fields of Rohan; "Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and

Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man's part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house'" (LotR 438). This is one of the key lessons that Tolkien wants to teach his readers by presenting to them characters of different races who acts as individuals, and are thereby responsible for their own choices. No race is in itself inherently evil, but some do succumb to it, either of their own choice, or because of fear and ignorance.

This is particularly evident in Saruman, who becomes unable to discern between good and ill. He is a Maia and an Istari, like Gandalf. But despite being sent from the Valar, he turns to evil. Tolkien stresses throughout his works that "nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so" (LotR 267). Saruman is the most powerful of the Istari, and is referred to as Saruman the White in *The Hobbit* and in the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings.* After Saruman's conversion to evil, and Gandalf's resurrection after his fall in Moria, Gandalf becomes the new White wizard, and the most powerful of the Istari. Saruman is deprived of his powers by the Valar as he turns to evil and forsakes his mission. This becomes apparent when Gandalf speaks to him in Isengard after the battle at Helm's Deep, and declares that "You have no colour now, and I cast you from the order and the Council" (583). As a repercussion of his actions, he is deprived of his status and his power. He goes from being one of the highest figures in the hierarchy of Middle-earth, to being shunned by Hobbits, whom are seen as one of the "lowest" of races. When it comes to the treatment of the races of Middle-earth and of nature, Saruman is seen as the opposite of Gandalf. In the meeting between Gandalf and Saruman after the destruction of Isengard, it becomes evident that Saruman does not value the different peoples of Middle-earth in the same way as Gandalf. He refers to Gandalf's company as "the violent and the ignorant", "lesser folk" and "cut-throats and small rag-tag that dangle at your tail" (581, 583), despite the presence of among others Théoden, king of Rohan. Saruman's contempt for anyone he perceives as lower-ranked than himself, coupled with his disrespect for nature, and his going against the wish of the deity

makes him a symbol of all that Tolkien detested.

As a devout Catholic, Tolkien believed that all natural things were “freighted with the depth of meaning that all things possess, being rooted in the mind of God. God does not create things simply to fill up space. He creates for a reason...” (Caldecott 24). Therefore the modern technological world, which appears not to care for nature, is a major object of criticism in his works. This is evident in the portrayal of his races on the good side, who all have some kind of inherent love of nature. The Hobbits love all things that come from the ground, and are “little interested in machinery more complicated than a water-mill” and is “a settled, unadventurous, agrarian people” (29). The Dwarves “prefer to dwell in caves and under mountains. They love silver and gold more than anything” (Vink 125). While the Elves “see nature as a thing of intrinsic value, not simply as a commodity” and “defend nature herself against a covetous power whose aim is to possess, exploit and despoil” (Garth, Tolkien, 219-20). This power takes different forms during the Ages of Middle-earth, such as Morgoth in *The Silmarillion* and Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings.* Saruman is also seen as such a power, but only one who strives to copy the real Dark Lord. The portrayal of the evil forces thus contains an implicit critique of a modern world that, often fails to see nature as something of intrinsic value, but rather treats it as a commodity. John Garth writes of this in his biography on Tolkien in his early years, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-earth*, and notes that Morgoth, and, by extension, Sauron and Saruman: “represents the tyranny of the machine over life and nature, exploiting the earth and its people in the construction of a vast armoury” (222). The free peoples of Middle-earth who fight against these forces represent Tolkien's view of how he believed nature should be treated and viewed. As we shall see the ‘good’ side of the fight shows how one should treat all that is created by God, meaning both nature and the creatures he has created.

Saruman’s bad treatment of the races of Middle-earth, and want to rule them is seen as

tyranny over life. His exploitation of nature is what in the end leads to his downfall. In working to create a vast army and armoury, for the purpose of subjugating others, he has felled a large amount of trees. This is what makes Treebeard angry, and leads to the attack of the Ents upon Isengard. The Ents serve as a symbol of nature striking back against the machine. Saruman's lack of love for what God has created, and willingness to exploit both people and nature, is what brings him down below the level of Hobbits. His degradation is obvious as the company travelling to Rivendell after the Fall of Sauron bumps into Saruman and Gríma:

> As they came out again into the open country at sundown they overtook an old man leaning on a staff, and he was clothed in rags of grey or dirty white, and at his heels went another beggar, slouching and whining (LotR 983)

> As the wretched pair passed by the company they came to the hobbits, and Saruman stopped and stared at them; but they only looked at him with pity (984)

The scene is quite ironic, as Saruman, who has been working to kill their friends, is now asking the Hobbits for a favour. Here, the generosity and friendliness of the Hobbits come into a stark contrast with the actions of Saruman. Despite his downfall being a result of not caring for nature and people, he does not seemed to have learnt from this, and goes on to create a mini-world for him to control in the Shire.

3.3 Tolkien's Criticism of the Modern World

Gandalf and Saruman, are both sent from the Gods to "contest Sauron" and "to move Elves and Men and all living things of good will to valiant deeds" (Si 360). Through Gandalf, it seems that his mission is not only to fight against Sauron, but also to help the free peoples of Middle-earth to come together again. The ideal world that Gandalf and the Elves leave behind is a world where friendships have developed between the races. The Fellowship symbolises

the beginning of this renewed connection between the different races of Middle-earth. By contrast, Sauron, as a servant of evil is working against plurality, and towards homogeneity. Christine Chism observes this as well, and states that "the monocultural dominion of Morgoth and Sauron is counterposed by the diversity of those who join together against all odds to resist them" (556). This monocultural dominion of Sauron and Saruman is based on a lack of agency, or free will; the ideal of their reign is unconditional, totalitarian servitude. The monocultural world of evil is best portrayed through the barbarian ways of the Orcs and the Uruk-hai. They represent all that humanity should not be - their world is presented as a thoroughgoing corruption of all that is valuable in human fellowship.

In order to acquire an army large enough to fight against the kingdom of Rohan, and eventually conquer Middle-earth, Saruman "creates" the Uruk-hai. They are, it seems, a mix of Men and Orcs, as they described as "man-high but with goblin-faces, sallow, leering, squint-eyed" (Lord of the Rings 566), and as "goblin-soldiers of greater stature, swart, slant-eyed, with thick legs and large hands" (415). They seem to be a genetically engineered race, bred by Saruman in order to generate an inexhaustible and hopefully unbeatable army. This is not explicitly made clear, but is hinted at, among others by Treebeard, who wonders how these tall Orcs came into being: "Are they Men he has ruined, or has he blended the races of Orcs and Men? That would be a black evil!'" (473). In "Tolkien's world only God can create, and the evil ones... can only pervert that creation" (Tally 18). In Treebeard's opinion, Saruman is working against the natural laws of Middle-earth, and perverting God's creation. The underlying theological idea in this context is that all creation comes from God. This is also the main idea behind Tolkien's sub-creation theory, and behind all his writing. This theory is based on a "belief that only God can truly make or create - that is, call something into existence from nothing. Humans can only alter or reshape or reform something that already exists. They cannot create something from nothing. Hence, they are not creators; they are sub-

creators. Only God is the true Creator. Sub-creation is then a purely mimetic. It mirrors the creative acts of God or echoes them" (R. Campbell 97). The manufacturing of the Uruk-hai is seen as a blasphemous action, a perversion of God's creation carried out in an act of selfishness, rather than a sub-creative act done in "worship and admiration for Him and His creation" (99), as Tolkien believed true sub-creation to be. In Middle-earth the races that care about nature and all that is made by Ilúvatar are seen as the good, and are the ones who have the Valar on their side – because they are acting out of selflessness, caring for God's creation. Morgoth, Sauron and Saruman on the other hand wish to create, but are only able to pervert his creation – and does this in order to gain power over others. This shows Tolkien's contempt for the "Machine" and the modern technological world that does not appreciate the makings of the true Creator.

This is linked to the notion of friendship that this thesis is focused upon. The main characterisation of the good peoples and individuals in *The Lord of the Rings* especially, is their friendliness towards all that is created by Eru, the One. Implicit in this, is friendliness towards the other races that were also created by God. Their care for nature thus extends to their care of each other. Those who do not care for nature or for others are portrayed as evil in Tolkien's world, since they do not value the creations of God. In this Tolkien's religiousness shines through. There is a sense of self-destructiveness in the portrayal of the Dark Lord's in Tolkien's world. Their hatred and greed makes them unable to see the value in small, ordinary things, and to be content with what is. This is what leads to their downfall. I think that what Tolkien wants to show us through the friendliness shown by the "good people" of Middle-earth, and the lack of such friendliness and love shown by the "bad people", is that "we should reckon nothing more damaging than anger..., and nothing more advantageous than love" (Cassian 245). This was said by the Catholic Saint, John Cassian, who lived around 400 AD. It conveys a general Christian attitude, which Tolkien, as a devout Catholic, must have

made adopted as his own. Anger and greed are portrayed as immoral features in Middle-earth, as well as in our own, and the Dark leaders of Middle-earth world are assuredly both angry and greedy. Their greed for power, and anger towards anyone who stands in their way, is their primary flaw, and makes them see all of God's creations as simply commodities – there for them to pervert and exploit to their own advantage. These leaders, or Dark Lords, must be seen as representatives of values that Tolkien feared was about to take over the modern world.

Saruman is such a representative, and is undoubtedly a character made to illuminate what Tolkien perceived as negative developments in his contemporary world. In the creation of the Uruk-hai, a sort of super-warrior, the actions of Saruman may be seen as a criticism of the racial doctrine of fascism as well as of the genetic engineering promoted by eugenicists in the first part of the twentieth-century. The fascist racial ideas were somewhat based on eugenic principles; the idea that some people were racially superior to others. But, as Marius Turda notes: "...Nazism was both an assault on eugenics and submission to it" (92). Fascism took some of its ideas from eugenics, and employed it in a most extreme way. Many eugenicists were not even racist, but just wanted to improve society through eugenic approaches. The idea was that one could create a new and better world by "improving" the people who lived in it. In order for this improvement to take place eugenicists advised, among others, that those seen as genetically inferior were to remain celibate, and that only those seen as genetically fit should be allowed procreate (Turda 67). This, along with the idea that some races were inherently better than others, was also a part of the Nazi policies which Tolkien openly repudiated in his letters (Letters 37). The Catholic Church, of which Tolkien was an active member, also opposed these negative eugenic policies (Turda 84, 88). This is documented among others in the papal encyclical of Pope Pius XI, Casti Cannubii, where the Church condemns those who "put eugenics before aims of a higher order" (section 68), such as marriage and the right to produce offspring. It thus seems likely that Tolkien was opposed

to these practices as well. With the Uruk-hai, Saruman is producing the strongest and most enduring warriors possible, much as was the idea of many nations in the 1930's. In the context of what was going on at this period in time, many eugenicists thought "it is necessary for the State to safeguard the breeding of warriors" (Turda 83). Therefore it was important to each nation that the majority of the children that were born were strong and healthy. Saruman ensures this by breeding his own warriors by mixing, it seems, Men and Orcs. How this breeding is executed, is uncertain, but Tolkien wants his readers to perceive this breeding in the same way Treebeard does, namely as "black evil".

It is probable that Tolkien invented the Uruk-hai and made their creation seem as something unnatural, in order to criticise the eugenic movement and the racial doctrine of fascism. He illuminates the issues and absurdities of eugenics and genetic engineering. Ralph C. Wood also acknowledges this in his book *The Gospel According to Tolkien*, and writes that "…the Uruk-hai also serve as fearful reminders that, about the same time Tolkien was writing his book, Nazi scientists were treating human life as a similarly malleable thing. They indulged in genetic matings that were prompted by a Sauronic desire to create a pure Nordic race of supermen" (52). Saruman is not concerned with racial purity as such, but of creating the strongest and most enduring army. He perceives the Orcs and Southern Men as the races most fit for war. He wanted his troops to be loyal to him, and thus chose to mix the two races he saw as unlikely to oppose his regime. The loyalty of the fascist regimes were based on a mix of fear and a sort of brainwashing propaganda, and it seems that this was the case also with Saruman's Uruk-hai. In the quarrel outside of Fangorn in Book Three of *The Lord of the Rings*, the Uruk-hai Uglúk exclaims "'We are the fighting Uruk-hai! We slew the great warrior. We took the prisoners. We are the servants of Saruman the Wise, the White Hand: the Hand that gives us man's flesh to eat...'" (446). This seems to the reader, as at least partially rehearsed, and this was probably the intention of the author. The Uruk-hai as well as

the Orcs are mere tools in a war, and thus are deprived of any benevolent human traits. They do not think for themselves, but are created as "machines" for the cause of war. I believe this is one of the things Tolkien saw as wrong with the eugenic movement as well as the fascist regimes: that people are of no value unless they are superior in some sense, or "created" for some overarching goal, such as winning a war; or improving society.

This becomes even more clear by comparing the Uruk-hai with the Hobbits. Both are in some way the servants of a Wizard, but in very different ways. The Hobbits in the Fellowship must be seen as the race probably most different from the Uruk-hai in Middle-earth. They are not great warriors in any sense of the word; they are small and not used to fighting. They are neither prone to it, as "at no time had Hobbits at any time been warlike, and they had never fought among themselves" (LotR 5). They are thus, in the context of war seen as somewhat useless – at least to those who does not know them well, as Tolkien also informs the reader that Hobbits "were, if it came to it, difficult to daunt or kill; (...) and (they) could survive rough handling by grief, foe or weather in a way that astonished those who did not know them well and looked no further than their bellies and their well-fed faces" (6). Saruman does not see the worth of the Halflings, and the only reason why Merry and Pippin are not killed when captured by the Uruk-hai, is that they have been given orders not to kill them because they might know the whereabouts of the Ring, or possess it themselves. To him, the ones worthy of his attention is the ones he can be sure to remain loyal. Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits or Wizards seems to be somewhat hard to convince, but Men has proved easier to persuade to join the dark side – as is visible with the examples of the Southerners, Gríma Wormtongue, the Númenóreans, and the Nine who became the Ringwraiths. The Orcs are already on the side of the Dark Lord, and in mixing these two races seen as most prone to evil, he is assured a loyal and strong army, as both Men and Orcs are known to be good warriors. Still, the victorious side of the War of the Ring is the side where people of all kinds fight

together – and the defeat of the Dark happens, as will be explored in the next chapter, as a consequence of the benevolent and merciful actions of Hobbits.

3.4 Conclusion

It is widely agreed upon by critics that Tolkien used his writing as a platform for criticising aspects of the modern technological world. Even though he explicitly stated that his work had no "inner meaning or 'message'" ('Foreword' xxiii) by his intention, he openly criticised what he referred to as "the Robot Age" (148) in his essay "On Fairy-Stories". From this essay, as well as his letters it is evident that Tolkien had a dislike for many aspects of the modern world. One of the factors Tolkien did embrace both in his own world, as well as in his imaginary world was the presence of hierarchies. Marjorie Burns also states that "Tolkien was a man who believed in rank and hereditary rule, and he was quick to define the world— both this world and the world he created— in hierarchical terms" (139). His races are thus ordered in this way, but it seems that this may be more directly motivated by a certain kind of cultural critique and nostalgia, rather than any form of racism. His hierarchies are present, but because of the humility of such characters as Gandalf, and the heroic deeds shown by the "low", these hierarches are designed to show that our inherited position, powers or race does not restrict or define who we are, nor justify a lack of care for others. What he displays instead, is that cooperation between the "high" and the "low" races is valuable and mutually beneficial, and that true nobility may appear in unexpected places. After all, Tolkien believed in a God who, in the words of the *Magnificat*, 'hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble' (Luke 1: 52).

4.0 The Distorted Hobbit

This chapter will deal with the unique relationships that evolve between Frodo, Sam and Gollum – all, at one stage or another, bearers of the One Ring – as they travel through Middle-earth. The focus will be on the relationships between Gollum and the Hobbits, developed through the entirety of book 4, and 6 chapters of book 6 of *The Lord of the Rings*. 'Friendship' between Gollum and the Hobbits is fraught and uncertain: but the possibility of such friendship – and the constant threat of its betrayal – is a key driver of the plot. It may be objected that there is no specifically interracial aspect in these relations, as Gollum used to be a Hobbit. This would, however, be a superficial view. I will argue that Gollum has been perverted or distorted by the Ring in a way resembling the making of the Orcs; in this sense, he is every bit as racially 'Other' as they in this story. Indeed, in his extreme physical and mental difference and isolation from all other creatures, he is the ultimate Other: despised and outcast from every community he encounters. The paradox that Tolkien explores especially through the relationship of Frodo and Gollum is that the very instrument of perversion and distortion – the Ring – ends up forming the basis of a new kind of sympathy and frail community of 'ring-bearers'. Against the will of its maker, even the Ring can transmit a kind of grace, by making it possible to recognise the Other as still available for empathy, partial trust, and perhaps even some tentative form of friendship.

4.1 Gollum: A Hobbit-ish Orc

Throughout Tolkien's legendarium, the Orcs are dealt with as a separate race from Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits and Men, albeit identified as an irredeemably evil race. However, as Tolkien repeatedly makes his reader aware that "nothing was evil in the beginning" (LotR 267), this might not be the case. At the Tower of Cirith Ungol, after being rescued by Sam, Frodo seems to have understood this, proclaiming that "the Shadow that made them can only

mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don't think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them…" (914). In *The Lord of the Rings*, this is all we get to know about the origin of the Orcs, until Appendix F, where we are told that "The Orcs were first bred by the Dark Power of the North in the Elder Days" (1131). In *The Silmarillion* we are told that the Eldar believed the Orcs to be Elves "who came into the hands of Melkor", and "were there put in prison, and by slow arts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved" (47). Further, Tolkien explains that "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" (47). Through the portrayal of the Orcs as a hideous and brutal race, Tolkien shows the extreme effects that evil can inflict on even the best of races. The Dark Lords' power to pervert even the Elves shows the scope of their evil, and their ability to put others people's minds under their control.

This perverting and controlling power is embedded in the Ring, as Sauron "let a great part of his former power pass into it" (LotR 51). Thus, the effect that the Ring has on Gollum might be compared to the perversion of the Orcs. In wearing and surrounding himself with the Ring for almost 500 years, Gollum becomes a tormented body and soul, filled with the malice of evil. In the same way that the Orcs "loathed their Master whom they served" (Si 47), Gollum "hated the dark, and he hated the light more: he hated everything, and the Ring most of all" (LotR 55). This is the effect of the Ring, as well as the effect of the Dark Lord. The way the Elves were held in prison by Morgoth, and there tortured and perverted, Gollum was held in prison by the Ring, being tortured and perverted by its powers. Gandalf explains to Frodo that, "He [Gollum] hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter (55). It is this duality, coupled with the fact that he is "not wholly ruined" (55), which makes Gollum who he is. The Orcs are presented as irredeemably evil, while for Gollum, it seems that the transformation into a fully obedient servant of evil is not quite complete. According to Gandalf, "there is little hope… for him.

Yet not no hope" (55). This seems to be because of his hobbitly strength: the same strength that makes it possible for Frodo and Sam to endure the Ring and bring it to Mount Doom.

As with most relationships in Tolkien's world, there is a hierarchy in the travelling trio of Frodo, Sam and Gollum. Frodo is the obvious leader of the group, as Sam and Gollum refers to him as either "Master" or "Master Frodo". His position as Ring-bearer, carrying the heaviest responsibility amongst the three, enhances this position. Sam's position in the Shire as Frodo's gardener and servant is maintained almost all through the novel, but it is Sam himself and his humility that puts him in this position, not Frodo. Gollum is the obvious underdog in the company, as he is seen as inferior in any way. This is among others due to his diminished both mental and physical state, as well as the fact that he can not be trusted. His double identity makes him both seem weird and schizophrenic, and it is hard for anyone to see beyond the freakishness he portrays. He is no longer identified as a Hobbit, despite him originally being "of hobbit-kind; akin to the fathers of the fathers of the Stoors" (LotR 52). His "hobbitness" is overall gone, and he is seen as a diminished and distorted figure, ruined by the powers of the Ring. Gollum's distortedness makes him appear as sort of a monster, which makes it hard for others to look at him with anything but disgust and fear. As he is spotted outside Lórien, his Otherness becomes apparent:

> A strange creature had been seen, running with bent back and with hands near the ground, like a beast and yet not of beast-shape. It eluded capture, and they had not shot it, not knowing whether it was good or ill… (350)

Luckily for Sam and Frodo, later in the story, the Elves appreciate most things that live, and this appreciation causes them to spare this wretched creature.

4.2 Fear of the Other

Because of Gollum's ultimate Otherness, caused by his extreme physical and mental

difference, he is isolated from every community. He was even expelled from his own family and "shunned by all his relations" (LotR 53-54), even before becoming physically different. His malice and greed was the reason for both his outcast position, as well as the reason why he acquired the Ring in the first place[14]. Later, his situation is not getting any better, as he is often assumed a creature associated with evil. This is shown among others in the scene where Gollum has been spotted by Anborn, one of Faramir's guards, but he is not able to identify what Gollum is:

> "I thought I heard the thing hiss at me from high above as I turned away. A large squirrel, maybe. Perhaps under the shadow of the Unnamed some of the beasts of Mirkwood are wandering hither to our woods. They have black squirrels there, 'tis said." (LotR 675)

Even after being captured, Faramir is highly suspicious of this creature, and believes that the best would be to kill him. Gollum is spared because of the words of Frodo, but is still "under doom of death" (690) in Gondor. This doom is a repercussion of his trespassing, but Faramir's words towards Gollum would probably have been gentler, had it not been for Gollum's wretchedness. This Otherness creates fear. His animal-like way of moving leads to people associating him with an animal, rather than anyone of a "human" race. Not even the Elves of Mirkwood wants anything to do with this miserable creature, and Frodo informs Faramir that Gandalf had to forbidden the Elves to kill him (686). The suspicions towards Gollum are not ungrounded, and his slyness makes him even more monstrous.

As Gollum becomes guide and travelling companion of Frodo and Sam, tension becomes the norm amongst the three. The tension is mostly caused by Sam's mistrust in Gollum, fearing that he will strangle them in their sleep (LotR 383, 615). Sam's love for

[14] Strangling his own friend for the Ring "because the gold looked so bright and beautiful" (LotR 53).

Frodo, and the fear of failing to bring the Ring to Mount Doom seem to be the underlying reasons for this mistrust. To trust such a wicked, treacherous creature when at such an important journey probably seems foolish to Sam. They already know of Gollum's dark past, and that "his malice is great and gives him a strength hardly to be believed in one so lean and withered" (255). He could definitely pose a threat to the Hobbits, but Frodo seems to trust him. This creates a tension between Sam and Frodo, and their friendship is challenged by their different view of Gollum. Their friendship is though never completely compromised, and the reader is constantly reminded of their bond. When Sam is worried about having enough food for their journey "there and back again", Frodo answers: "But Samwise Gamgee, my dear hobbit – indeed, Sam my dearest hobbit, friend of friends – I do not think we need to give thought to what comes after than" (624). Their friendship is still strong, but the presence of Gollum is affecting it. It might be that Sam feels threatened by the presence of Gollum, and their relationship. Sam has been somewhat replaced by Gollum as the servant of Frodo, and perhaps feels that his position has been reduced to mere baggage on the journey. This could be one of the reasons for Sam's apparent dislike of Gollum.

Sam's attitude towards Gollum could also be explained through the mild xenophobia portrayed in the Hobbits. Tolkien lets his readers know that Hobbits in general were "shy of 'the Big Folk'", that is Men, and avoided them "with dismay" (LotR 1), as well as being afraid and distrustful of the Elves (7). They even had biases within their communities. In the Shire, Hobbits from Buckland were seen as "queer" (22), and Shire-hobbits referred to everyone who lived beyond their borders as Outsiders (150). So, Sam's prejudice probably stems from his upbringing and the way the Hobbits in the Shire perceived others. Among the Hobbits of the Company, it is through Sam that this fear of the Other is most visible – except when it comes to the Elves, who he loves. This becomes apparent at farmer Maggots, even before leaving the Shire, as we are told that; "Sam sipped his beer suspiciously. He had a natural

mistrust of the inhabitant of other parts of the Shire...” (93). He also distrusts Aragorn when first meeting him at the Prancing Pony, but this might among others be due to the perception Hobbits have of Men. At Rivendell, Frodo is speaking to Gandalf about Aragorn, telling him that:

> “In fact, he reminds me often of you. I didn't know that any of the Big People were like that. I thought, well, that they were just big, and rather stupid; kind and stupid like Butterbur; or stupid and wicked like Bill Ferny.” (220-221)

Prejudice when it comes to others is thus not just seen with Sam, but is seen both with Frodo, and as a general trait with many of the races of Middle-earth. This is caused by their estrangement, and thereby their lack of knowledge of each other’s ways. Through *The Lord of the Rings*, we see many of the characters’ road towards understanding the other races, and thus disposing of their prejudices.

Gollum’s Otherness is caused, or brought by, by the evil powers of the Ring. Sam’s fright or mistrust of Gollum is however, not caused by the fact that he is evil like Sauron or Saruman. Gollum does not have an agenda to take over the world, to control others, or to make Middle-earth into a mono-cultural dominion subdued by fear. He only wants the Ring for himself. His Otherness is caused by the wearying effect of the Ring upon both his mind and body. It has made him into something Other, but not in the sense wanted by the Dark Lord, as he does not obey him. Charles Keim also notices this in his article on the similarities between Gollum and Shakespeare’s Othello: “Unlike the other dark characters Gollum is neither wholly evil, nor does he pursue his “precious” with a determination that is single-minded; and Gollum expresses little interest in using the Ring to rule Middle-earth” (298). This is what makes him the ultimate Other: there is no one else like Gollum. It is not strange that Gollum is perceived as someone associated with evil. His way of moving is recurrently

referred to as that of a spider, and in Tolkien's world spiders are never good[15] creatures. Sam's prejudice against Gollum stems more from the fact that he is treacherous, and unpredictable – as neither he, nor anyone else for that matter, are familiar with his ways and his thoughts.

Sam's aversion towards Gollum is based on Gollum's status as an outcast, on his Otherness, and probably first and foremost on his unpredictability and treacherousness. Frodo does not view this creature in the same way, because of his connection with him through the Ring. Sam does not understand this connection and Frodo's pity until the very end. The promise that Gollum swears on the Ring, binds him, even though it is a promise made against the wish of the Ring, which we learn is "to get back to its master" (LotR 55). This promise binds him, and ironically brings about the downfall of Sauron. This does not mean that he does not think about killing the Hobbits and claiming the Ring for himself, which he clearly does. This is seen as he is arguing with himself about this on the outskirts of the Dead Marches:

> "But the Precious holds the Promise," the voice of Sméagol objected.
>
> "Then take it," said the other, "and let's hold it ourselfs! Then we shall be master, *gollum*! Make the other hobbit, the nasty suspicious hobbit, make him crawl, yes, *gollum*!
>
> (…)
>
> "But He'll see, He'll know. He'll take it away from us!"
>
> "He sees. He knows. He heard us make silly promises – against his orders, yes…" (633)

It is this treacherousness that makes Sam so willing to get rid of Gollum, and that makes him unable to see what Frodo sees in Gollum. Sam only sees his Otherness and wretchedness.

Sam's dislike for Gollum, and his other "part" Sméagol, is apparent in the nicknames

[15] Ungoliant in *The Silmarillion,* the spiders in Mirkwood in *The Hobbit*, and Shelob in *The Lord of the Rings.*

that he gives him, respectively Stinker and Slinker. Even before knowing him, he shows aversion to him, as he and Frodo spots him in Emyn Muil[16]: "Sam restrained himself, though his fingers were twitching. His eyes, filled with anger and disgust, were fixed on the wretched creature as he now began to move again, still whispering and hissing to himself" (LotR 614). Sam has made up his mind about Gollum from the stories that he has been told about him, and seems to have made up his mind about never going to show any kindness towards him. That Sam can show sympathy for someone Other, without knowing the person is shown later in the novel. In Ithilien, as a dead Sauthron falls down next to where the Hobbits are hiding with two of Faramir's Rangers, Sam starts wondering:

> He wondered what the man's name was and where he came from; and if he was really evil of heart, or what lies and threats had led him on the long march from his home; and if he would not really rather have stayed there in peace… (LotR 661)

Despite his belonging to the "wrong" side of the War, Sam begins to think about the tragic faith of this man, and whether he really was evil. This shows the friendly nature of the Hobbits, looking for something inherently good in everyone. As Sam wonders whether the Southron has been threatened to come on this journey, and join in on this War, it seems that he is relating himself to this man and his quest. His own quest is quite different, but he would probably rather have stayed at home and lived there in peace.

4.3 The Merciful Master

When first meeting Gollum in Emyn Muil, the Hobbits fear that Gollum is in cooperation with the Orcs, trying to capture them and the Ring. After crashing into him, their perception of his agenda seems to change, as Gollum professes that: "We didn't mean no harm, but they

[16] A range of hills east of the Great River, the place that Frodo and Sam first comes to after having left the rest of the Fellowship.

jump on us like cats on poor mices, they did, precious. And were so lonely, *gollum*. We'll be nice to them, very nice, if they'll be nice to us, won't we, yes, yess" (614). His claim that he is lonely shows that there might still be something humane or perhaps even hobbitly left in him, and this is perhaps why Gandalf means that he is not yet completely irredeemable. Of course, one can never fully believe and trust such a treacherous creature, and throughout, neither Sam nor Frodo fully does. What makes Gollum willing to follow the Hobbits to Mordor is never presented to be his loneliness or want of friendship. It is rather the effect of the Ring, and his promise upon it, which prevents him from killing the Hobbits and taking the Ring for himself. It does not, however, prevent him from luring the Hobbits into Shelob's Lair. According to Gollum, he has not broken his promise in doing this, as he will not be the one harming the Hobbits (726), which he has promised not to do, and: "when She throws away the bones and empty garments, we shall find it, we shall get it, the Precious… And we'll save the Precious, as we promised" (724). That his intentions were never very good, is visible in his words before he fell down to where Frodo and Sam were hiding in Emyn Muil: "Where iss it, where iss it: my Precious, my Precious? It's ours, it is, and we wants it. The thieves, the thieves, the filthy little thieves. Where are they with my Precious? Curse them! We hates them!" (613). This is of course Gollum, or Stinker, talking, and not Sméagol, who is the one swearing to "never, never to let Him have it" and to "serve the master of the Precious" (618). In the end, it seems that both "parts" of Gollum agrees on bringing the Hobbits to Shelob.

Sam's protectiveness towards Frodo, as well as the frailty of the relationship between the three is what in the end urges Gollum's choice to lure the Hobbits into Shelob's lair. Sam's protectiveness, and love for Frodo is visible as he is urging Frodo to get some sleep on the top of the stairs towards Cirith Ungol: "I'd be dearly glad to see you have a sleep. I'd keep a watch over you; and anyway, if you lay near, with my arm round you, no one could come pawing you without your Sam knowing it" (LotR 714). Also Gollum's "care" for Frodo is

visible in this scene. At this point Gollum seems not yet determined to hand the Hobbits over to Shelob, and the reader is told that as he is looking at Sam and Frodo sleeping,

> A strange expression passed over his lean hungry face. The gleam faded from his eyes, and they went dim and grey, old and tired. A spasm of pain seemed to twist him, and he turned away, peering back up towards the pass, shaking his head, as if engaged in some interior debate. Then he came back, and slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee – but almost the touch was a caress (714).

Sam wakes up and misreads this, as he believes that there is nothing in Gollum that might still be good. It seems that it is the accusations of Sam in this very moment, his inability to see the speck of good that is still left in Gollum, which makes the good part of Gollum succumb to the evil part.

The promise made by Gollum upon his Precious, is the beginning of Frodo and Gollum's relationship as master and servant, much as Frodo and Sam's relationship as master and servant, but based on very different grounds. Frodo and Gollum's relationship, it seems, is based on more than just their roles with regard to the Ring. Sam recognizes, as Frodo asks Sméagol to swear by the Ring, that:

> For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog. Yet the two were in some way akin and not alien: they could reach one another's minds (618).

The Ring and the burden of bearing it, links the two together in a way which is impossible for Sam to understand, until after he as carried the Ring himself. The power of the Ring also makes Frodo seem as a master, and binds Gollum to his promise. As seen in the scene by the Forbidden Pool, this promise goes two ways:

> Only one true shot, and Frodo would be rid of the miserable voice for ever. But no, Gollum had a claim on him now. The servant has a claim on the master for service, even service in fear. They would have foundered in the Dead Marches but for Gollum (LotR 687).

As Gollum has been holding up his part of the deal, Frodo finds himself bound to protect the creature. Gollum's kindness and will to serve them enhances this. It seems that "Gollum's motives in guiding them are not wholly evil; one part of him, of course, is waiting for an opportunity to steal the Ring, but another part feels gratitude and genuine affection for Frodo" (Auden 59). His willingness to serve probably comes from this affection for Frodo, and thus it is visible that there are stronger forces than the Ring at work. Perhaps in his misery and loneliness, some part of him is able to enjoy the company of others. It is visible that it is Frodo whom he wants to be around, rather than Sam who he sees as, among others "the nasty suspicious hobbit" (633).

To know what a burden the Ring is upon mind and body, makes Frodo pity Gollum, and is the reason for his kindness. Sam does not share this insight, but at some point[17], he understands that it is more the Ring than anything else, which drives Gollum. Frodo's sympathy is caused by the fact that he knows that Gollum has not become what he is by choice. The power of the Ring made it impossible for Gollum to part with it, and it is because of the Ring, and no will of his own, that he has become the wretched creature that he is. Jane Chance also notices[18] that:

> … Frodo *does* in fact pity the degenerate Hobbit. Frodo's pity urges him to reach out to that tiny speck of Hobbit, of grace, of nonbestiality, still inherent in Gollum's nature…

[17] After the Dead Marches, Sam catches Gollum in a moment where he is debating with himself, and with this understands that the chief danger in Gollum is not his desire to eat hobbits, but rather the call of the Ring (LotR 634).
[18] In her *Lord of the Rings: The Mythology of Power*

> And so Frodo *respects* Gollum's difference and appeals to their common denominator of Hobbitness by addressing the creature, not by the humiliating and degrading (if accurate) name Gollum but by the original and untarnished name Sméagol (original emphasis, 82).

Frodo is trying to see if it is possible to salvage, or bring out the small part of Gollum that is still Sméagol, by addressing him, rather than the Gollum-part. As Chance writes, his kindness towards this creature is based upon both pity and respect: a respect of his endurance, and of his struggle. This is why it becomes easier for Frodo to accept the presence of Gollum, and include him in the Quest. As Gollum is having a break down, just by the idea of going back to Mordor and towards Sauron, Frodo turns to him:

> "He will not go away or go to sleep at your command, Sméagol," said Frodo. "But if you really wish to be free from him again, then you must help me. And that I fear means finding us a path towards him." (LotR 616).

Frodo is showing sympathy, and even seems to believe that he in some way can help Gollum out of the state he is in by destroying the Ring. The words of Gandalf were probably the initiating force behind Frodo's choice not to kill Gollum, but as they proceed, it seems that Frodo understands that "he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end" (59).

Tolkien might have created the creature Gollum, in order to show the powers of the Ring upon even the sturdiest of peoples. Gollum foreshadows what might have become Frodo's or even Bilbo's future, if they held on the Ring, and by some miracle was allowed to live on without being hunted by Sauron. In my reading of it, Frodo is afraid of the Ring and its impact on him, and needs to believe that the Ring will not ruin him forever. By seeing if Gollum can at least in some ways be redeemed, he will know that there is a chance of coming back. When asking Sméagol if he knows the way to Mordor, and if he has been there,

answers:

> "Don't ask Sméagol. Poor, poor Sméagol, he went away long ago. They took his Precious, and he's lost now."
>
> "Perhaps we'll find him again, if you come with us," said Frodo.
>
> "No, no, never! He's lost his Precious," said Gollum. (LotR 616).

It is however Sméagol who swears on the Ring to bring them to Mordor, and to be "very, very good" (618), and for a long time it seems that something has changed within him[19]. This change, towards something good, but still Other, is what makes a kind of friendship possible between Gollum and Frodo, even though it is a somewhat frail relationship between master and servant.

As mentioned earlier, the frailty of this relationship between Gollum and Frodo is caused to some extent by Sam's mistrust. It is however, also caused by Gollum's double nature, and treacherousness. This is especially seen at the Forbidden Pool where he, before being aware of Frodo's presence, is talking to himself:

> "Dirty hobbits, nasty hobbits. Gone and left us, *gollum;* and Precious is gone. Only poor Sméagol all alone. No Precious. Nasty Men, they'll take it, steal my Precious. Thieves. We hates them. Fissh, nice fissh. Makes us strong. Makes eyes bright, fingers tight, yes. Throttle them, precious. Throttle them all, yes, if we gets chances. Nice fissh. Nice fissh!" (LotR 686)

After Frodo has appeared, and threatened him with using the Precious, his behaviour completely switches. This could seem to happen as a consequence of mentioning the Ring,

[19] "From that moment a change, which lasted for some time, came over him. He spoke with less hissing and whining, and he spoke to his companions direct, not to his precious self. He would cringe and flinch, if they stepped near him or made any sudden movement, and he avoided the touch of their elven-cloaks; but he was friendly and indeed pitifully anxious to please. He would cackle with laughter and caper, if any jest was made, or if Frodo spoke kindly to him, and weep if Frodo rebuked him" (LotR 618-19).

but it is not the first time this kind of behaviour is seen with Gollum. Characteristic in this instance is the mentioning of himself as Sméagol, both when displaying his "bad" as well as his "good" side:

> "Nice Master!" he whispered. "Nice hobbit, come back to poor Sméagol. Good Sméagol comes. Now let's go, go quickly, yes." (687)

This could suggest that the two parts of him are becoming more and more united, as an effect of surrounding himself with the Ring again. It seems in general, that it does not take much to bring out the dark side of Gollum, and his treachery in leading the Hobbits into Shelob's lair might have been caused by lesser things than the accusations of Sam.

4.4 Friendly Hobbits, Devious Hobbits

The Hobbits of the Fellowship seem to have some kind of special inclination towards friendship. Except for Sam perhaps, they seem to have little or no prejudice towards the people that they meet, regardless of race. Everywhere they go they make friends, and by this, they display the ultimate trait in Tolkien's world: acceptance of Others. Jane Chance sees this quality especially prominent in Frodo, but contradicts herself when it comes to Frodo's view of the difference of Gollum. First she argues: "That Frodo can tolerate difference is symbolically clear to the reader... because he is accompanied by his cousin Merry Brandybuck, who, like Frodo's mother, hales from Buckville near the Old Forest" (Mythology, 34)[20]. Her argument is that, as Frodo is accustomed to surrounding himself with people who are seen as "queer" and Other to the rest of the Shire, he is tolerant of difference in general. However, later she states that, "For Frodo, Gollum is the Shire equivalent of a Brandybuck living across the river, so that the Ringbearer initially reacts to Gollum's

strangeness... with suspicions and indignation" (36). To Frodo, the Brandybucks are indeed not strange at all, but his family and friends. To state that Frodo reacts to Gollum's strangeness with suspicion, as well as stating that Frodo is generally tolerant of difference is valid. However, by linking both arguments to Frodo's position towards the Brandybucks, Chance undermines her own argument.

The Hobbits' inclination towards friendship is not as visible with Sam, at least not when it comes to Gollum. Frodo's willingness to let Gollum lead them to Mordor seems to stem from the words of Gandalf telling Frodo that: "My heart tells me that he [Gollum] has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end…" (LotR 59). Even Sam seems to understand the usefulness of Gollum as their guide, as they progress towards Mordor, despite his mistrust in him. As Gollum disappears before Cross-roads on their way towards Minas Morgul and Cirith Ungol, Sam proclaims that:

> "Well, I can't abide him," said Sam. "In fact, I've never taken anything on a journey that I'd have been less sorry to lose on the way. But it would be just like him, after coming all these miles, to go and get lost now, just when we shall need him most – that is, if he's ever going to be any use, which I doubt." (LotR 700)

Sam understands that they need Gollum, if they are to have any chance to get into Mordor unnoticed. This is due to his deviousness, and knowledge of how to get out of Mordor: both factors making him the perfect as well as the worst guide. Gollum's ultimate Otherness and two-sidedness rightly makes Sam suspicious, but in the end, after talking about wanting to kill him since their first meeting – Sam understands this Otherness.

The inclination towards friendship displayed in the Hobbits especially in the later parts of the novel seems somewhat in contrast with their xenophobia mentioned earlier. This must be seen in the context of the general estrangement of the races in Middle-earth. As seen in the other chapters of my thesis, prejudice is not found only in the Hobbits, but in most races of Middle-

earth as a result of centuries of isolation. Typical for the Hobbits it seems, is that they are quick to overcome these prejudices, and form friendships irrespective of the Other's race or status in the social hierarchy. This is visible in the Hobbits' friendships with Gandalf, Aragorn, Théoden, Faramir, Galadriel, Gimli, Treebeard, Gollum and so on. Rose Zimbardo also notes about the Hobbits that:

> Their peculiar excellence is not heroic honor but love. Frodo is finally saved because he has pitied Sméagol. Sam is moved to deeds of heroic exploit out of love for Frodo. Merry and Pippin are transformed into thanes out of love for the kings they serve. They comprise the core of the fellowship, and in the end, as in the beginning, it is love that binds them (102).

It seems they are not very concerned with the hierarchies of the world, and tend to try to treat people equally. This is seen in the meeting between Merry, Pippin and King Théoden, where they immediately start rambling on about the Shire, and noting that: "So that is the King of Rohan!" said Pippin in an undertone. "A fine old fellow. Very polite." (559). The Hobbits treat the kingly as everyone else, and Sam even calls Aragorn by the nickname Strider, at the end of the novel, seeing him more as a friend than the King of Gondor (953). These qualities with the Hobbits functions as a glue in the Fellowship, as well as serving as an example to the other races on how one can treat each other, despite of differences.

The Ring makes everything seem different, and as Chance notices, "The Ring's power cripples one's higher nature and alters perception of the Other in a way that prohibits union and camaraderie" (Mythology, 48). Therefore it is hard for Frodo to trust anyone. The Ring makes him suspicious of others, and recurrently makes him paranoid when Sam asks if he can help him carry the burden of the Ring. Sam does not seem to do this with any other agenda than to help his friend whom he sees is suffering, and Frodo knows this, but is affected by the Ring. This is visible among others when Sam is rescuing Frodo from the Tower of Cirith

Ungol, and is giving Frodo the Ring back, but offering to help him bear the Ring:

> "No, no!" cried Frodo, snatching the Ring and chain from Sam's hands. "No you won't you thief!" He panted, staring at Sam with eyes wide with fear and enmity… Sam had changed before his very eyes into an orc again, leering and pawing at his treasure, a foul little creature with greedy eyes and slobbering mouth. But now the vision had passed. There was Sam kneeling before him, his face wrung with pain, as if he had been stabbed in the heart; tears welled from his eyes.
>
> "Oh Sam!" cried Frodo. "What have I said? What have I done? Forgive me! After all that you have done. It is the horrible power of the Ring." (LotR 912)

The Ring's effect of altering the perception of the Other is also visible in Gollum, as he seems to distrust both Orcs, Men, Elves and Dwarves. This can of course be due to their treatment of him in the past, but it is clear that the Ring's impact on him is the main reason behind Gollum's loneliness. His willingness to guide the Hobbits, without trying to kill them or trick them, is mostly due to the promise he has made, but might also have something to do with his ancestry. Perhaps it is easier for him to trust or surround himself with Hobbits than any other race, as they are not Other, but rather familiar to him.

The Hobbits are seen as familiar to Gollum, but he is not seen as that familiar to them, as his transformation towards something Orc-ish seems to have gone too far. Zimbardo notes about Gollum that, "Under the torment of his lust for the Ring, every aspect of his hobbit nature is distorted to parody" (105). Still, Gandalf makes the reader as well as Frodo aware that Gollum used to be "of hobbit-kind", and that this was one of the reasons why he and Bilbo "understood one another remarkably well, very much better than a hobbit would understand, say, a Dwarf, or an Orc, or even an Elf" (LotR 54). Maybe this contributed to the pity that Bilbo showed towards Gollum. Perhaps he saw a glimpse of something familiar in Gollum, which contributed to the feeling that he should show him mercy. It is evident, at least

that Bilbo felt compassion, and somehow understood that Gollum had not deliberately chosen this life for himself: "A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart: a glimpse of endless unmarked days without light or hope of betterment, hard stone, cold fish, sneaking and whispering" (Hob 102). Frodo does not see why Gollum should be pitied, but as Gandalf reminds him, he has not seen Gollum, and does not understand the scope of Gollum's wretchedness:

> "What a pity that Bilbo did not stab that vile creature, when he had the chance!"
> "Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that he took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity."
> "I am sorry," said Frodo. "But I am frightened; and I do not feel pity for Gollum."
> "You have not seen him," Gandalf broke in.
> "No, and I don't want to," said Frodo. "I can't understand you. Do you mean that you, and the Elves, have let him live on after all those horrible deeds? Now at any rate he is as bad as an Orc, and just an enemy. He deserves death." (LotR 59)

It is only after meeting Gollum, and understanding that it is the impact of the Ring rather than anything else that has made him what he is. His pity might also be a result of some pre-ordained plan, that Gollum was meant to go with them to Mount Doom, and bite Frodo's finger off.

When Gollum attacks the two Hobbits upon Mount Doom, he has already betrayed them; trying to send them towards a certain death in Shelob's Lair. This should certainly be reason enough to want to kill Gollum. Despite Sam's recurrent threats and wishes to kill the wretched creature, he is not able to do see it through:

> …deep in his heart there was something that restrained him: he could not strike this

> thing lying in the dust, forlorn, ruinous, utterly wretched. He himself, though only for a little while, had borne the ring, and now dimly guessed the agony of Gollum's shrivelled mind and body, enslaved to that Ring, unable to find peace or relief ever in life again. (LotR 944)

Sam finally realizes the nature and agony of Gollum. His pity and mercy in this moment, coupled with the same pity shown by both Frodo and Bilbo in the past, is what in the end saves Middle-earth. Tolkien foreshadows how it all will end at least two times[21]: the last time through the words of Frodo at Mount Doom, saying that "If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom" (944). Ironically, it is by succumbing to the Ring's powers that Gollum touches Frodo, and casts himself into the Fire. Stratford Caldecott writes in his book *Secret Fire* that "in the end it is not Frodo who saves Middle-earth at all, though he bore the Ring to the Mountain, nor Gollum, who took the Ring into the Fire. It can only be God himself, working through the love and freedom of his creatures..." (Caldecott 37). The lesson Tolkien seems to want to teach is that, had there not been for the hearts of the Hobbits, their forgiving nature, and ability to feel for the Other, evil might have triumphed.

4.5 Sub-creation among Hobbits

God's presence in *The Lord of the Rings* is best felt in the actions of Sam, Frodo and Gollum. This God, named Ilúvatar or Eru in *The Silmarillion*, is never explicitly mentioned in this epic. The presence of some higher power is nevertheless evident in several parts of the book[22].

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[21] The instance quoted, plus on p. 640 as Frodo is telling Gollum that "You will never get it back. In the last need, Sméagol, I should put on the Precious; and the Precious mastered you long ago. If I, wearing it, were to command you, you would obey, even if it were to leap from a precipice or to cast yourself into the fire" (LotR 640)

[22] Especially evident as Gandalf is telling Frodo of how Bilbo got the Ring: "Behind that here was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ringmaker. 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" (LotR 56).
The Phial of Galadriel also holds some heavenly power, as seen on p. 915 with the Two Watchers at Cirith Ungol, as well as in Shelob's Lair as Frodo cries "*Aiya Eãrendil Elenion Ancalima!*..., and knew not what he had spoken; for it seemed that another voice spoke through his, clear, untroubled by the foul air of the pit" (720).

This God, must in Tolkien's view be a version of his own God, as he claims that the world of Middle-earth is indeed our own world in some ancient past (Caldecott 8). Caldecott links the love and freedom of the creatures of Middle-earth to God. The presence of God is important to Tolkien when it comes to storytelling and creative powers. The idea behind his sub-creation theory, is that: "All that humankind 'makes,' can only be manufactured or formed from preexistent materials — even if those 'materials' are merely images or ideas, as these also are provided by or derived from God" (Campell 99). Subsequently, all writing and storytelling contain of ideas and images derived from, or provided by God. In Middle-earth then, God is working to show his creatures the advantages of love and understanding towards the Other, as seen with among others Frodo, Sam and Gollum. Through Tolkien's writing, these ideas are conveyed to the reader as important not only in Middle-earth, but also in ours.

Storytelling was important to Tolkien, and this is mirrored in his portrayal of Sam and Frodo. As their journey is proceeding towards an uncertain end, Sam starts reflecting on how the great stories and songs of their world came into being, and wondering what kind of story they are a part of. It seems that he understands that Providence or chance, more than anything else is what brings people upon such Quests as their own:

> "Folk seem to have just been landed in them, usually – their paths were laid that way, as you put it. But I expect that they had lots of chances, like us, of turning back, only they didn't." (LotR 711)

Their path has been laid, and they do not turn back, as they are not meant to. The part Gollum comes to play in this story seems still hidden to them. Sam recons that "even Gollum might be good in a tale", and wonders "if he thinks he's the hero or the villain" (713). Sam does not seem to take into account that Gollum is in fact a part of their story, and that he will have a

crucial role in it, in the end. Frodo acknowledges Gollum's role after the Ring has been destroyed, telling Sam that:

> "But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain, even at the bitter end. So let us forgive him! For the Quest is achieved, and now all is over. I am glad you are here with me. Here at the end of all things, Sam." (947).

Despite this, Sam does not see Gollum as the one entering the history books, and would rather hear the "*story of Nine-fingered Frodo and the Ring of Doom*" (950). In all his humility he also removes himself from the story, and puts all the honour on Frodo. Gollum still had a large part to play. Somehow he landed in this story, but even at the end it is not quite clear whether he was in fact a hero or a villain.

4.6 Conclusion

What in the end saves Middle-earth appear as something quite ironic. The irony springs from the Ring and its effect upon its carriers. The Ring is what binds Gollum to his promise to help Frodo and Sam into Mordor. It somehow binds him to his promise, despite of this promise being against the will of the Ring and its maker. In this, it might be that some greater force is at work. Middle-earth is based on the idea that the only real creator is God, and that everything that is stems from him. God, or Ilúvatar is the only one who can truly create from nothing (Tally 18, Caldecott 107), and implicit in this lies the idea that everything that happens stems from God. Stratford Caldecott in his *Secret Fire* tells us that Eru "incorporates with his infinite creativity and foresight even evil into his design" (116). What seems to be at work is divine Providence, and this is what enables the promise of Sméagol to work even against the will of Sauron. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia divine Providence is "God Himself considered in that act by which in His wisdom He so orders all events within the universe that the end for which it was created may be realized" (Walker). Walker also

mentions, as Caldecott does, that both Tolkien's God, as well as Eru, who is fashioned in the likeness of the Catholic God "directs all, even evil and sin itself, to the final end for which the universe was created". By the will of Ilúvatar, who is the only one who without doubt can match the powers of Sauron, Gollum is held by his promise to the Ring.

This promise aids Frodo and Sam on their way towards Mount Doom, but the Ring is constantly testing them. The Ring, as mentioned, isolates the wearer of it by making everyone else seem Other and discourages friendship. The relationship between Gollum and Frodo is based on Gollum's promise upon the Ring, but also some strange connection between the two. This connection seems to be caused by their mutual experience in wearing the Ring, and thus understanding the other's misery and loneliness. The evil of the Ring is paradoxically working against itself in creating a sort of friendship based on empathy for the Other who has also experienced the perverting powers of the Ring. Sam's prejudice and dislike for Gollum disrupts Frodo and Gollum's relationship, and causes for Gollum to send them to Shelob. Ironically, this is what saves them in the end. Had it not been for Sam's accusations towards Gollum as he finds him "pawing" at Frodo in his sleep, Gollum would never have sent them to Shelob, and she would most likely, never have stung Frodo. Then, Sam would never have been able to carry the Ring, as Frodo is reluctant to share the burden, and he would not have the insight that leads to his pity towards Gollum at Mount Doom.

The Ring forms a kind of frail community of 'ring-bearers' against its own knowledge, which in the end leads to its destruction. Through its isolating powers, it creates a new kind of fellowship of sympathy and pity. Its powers of making everyone else seem Other, creates a new and fragile interracial relationship between Gollum and Frodo. In the end Sam is included in this fellowship, as he has also felt the powers of the Ring. Sam's pity, as well as Gollum's final surrender to the powers of the Ring is what leads to Sauron's downfall. Sam was always right that Gollum's dark side was not too far away, but Frodo was also right in

believing Gandalf's words that Gollum had "some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end" (LotR 59). In Gandalf's words, as well in as the actions of Frodo, Sam and Gollum the presence of Providence seems quite clear. Perhaps it was the grand plan all along by Ilúvatar to form an interracial community of 'ring-bearers' who had all experienced the evil of the Ring in order to destroy it. Tolkien certainly presents it to the reader as if the way it happened, was the only way for evil not to win.

5.0 Aragorn and Arwen: Interracial Marriage and the Eschatology of Middle-earth

In this chapter, the notion of friendship will be extended in order to include the relationship between Aragorn and Arwen; the coming together of a mortal Man and an Elven maiden. As a key symbol in Tolkien's mythology, this relationship is at the heart of *The Lord of the Rings* even if, within the story of the War of the Ring itself, it is less prominent. As Paul Kocher explains it:

> Unless the reader is very alert to the few obscure references to Arwen scattered here and there…, he can easily wake up somewhere in Volume III with a shock of total surprise at Aragorn's approaching marriage to the lady. Not until the beautiful "Tale of Aragorn and Arwen" in Appendix A do we fully grasp her influence upon his life and see him whole. (131-32)

The story of the third union of one of the Eldar and one of Mankind, told of in *The Lord of the Rings*, closely mirrors Tolkien's story of Beren and Lúthien from *The Silmarillion*. These stories both tell of the union of one of the Firstborn of Ilúvatar with the Secondborn, and of their struggles to find a way to be together. The issues they are faced with are: the quest laid on the Man by the father of the Elven maid, the fact that one of them is immortal and will outlive the other, and in both cases they are in the middle of a war against a Dark Lord. The first of the marriages occurred during the First Age, when Men and Elves lived side by side and fought together against Morgoth. The marriage of Arwen and Aragorn on the other hand, happened at a time when the two races had long been estranged, but was now again fighting together against a common enemy.

Their marriage may thus be seen as a symbol of the revival of the bond between Elves and Men in yet another struggle against the Shadow. Beyond the War of the Ring itself, their union points forward to a new age in which the Elves will depart Middle-earth: but in the offspring of Aragorn and Arwen, and in particular in their son Eldarion, some of the power,

wisdom and glory of the Elves will live on in the world of Men. One of Aragorn's names, given to him by Elrond, is "Estel", hope: he fulfils his own hope in marrying Arwen, and the hope of Men lives on in their reign and in their line. But their story is also about hope in a larger, eschatological sense that was central to Tolkien's entire conception of Men and Elves in his world. While the Elves do not die as long as this world, Arda, lasts – even if they are "slain" they reincarnate – death is natural to Men: indeed, death is, as we shall see, said to be a *gift* of Illuvatar to the race of Men. Arwen, being of half-Elven lineage, is able to choose whether to suffer the "doom of Men", which is death: in embracing life with Aragorn, she knows she will outlive him, and she does in fact die only after experiencing long, immense sorrow. This tragic aspect of their relationship shows vividly why marriage between Men and Elves is usually not considered a good idea: their union, like that of Beren and Luthien before them, is very much an exception to this rule. However, such exceptions in Iluvatar's design for Arda and its people do occur, and in Tolkien's vision they are hugely significant. This chapter will argue that interracial marriage is an eschatological sign in Tolkien's world: it points towards a hope of a final harmony of Elves and Men in the Second Music of Iluvatar, beyond the end of Arda itself. Even though this kind of interracial marriage carries grave risks and potential problems within Middle-earth *as it is*, it can still, when lived as a vocation that involves fully accepting one's "doom", or place within God's design, become a powerful symbol of the ultimate reconciliation of all creatures *beyond* Arda.

5.1 The Doom of Mortality

When discussing Elves and Men, we may first note that Tolkien was ambiguous whether Men and Elves were even seen as separate races, as they can procreate. In a letter from 1954 regarding questions of whether Elves and Men were inherently different races, Tolkien wrote that:

> Elves and Men are represented as biologically akin in this 'history', because Elves are certain aspects of Men and their talents and desires, incarnated in my little world. They have certain freedoms and powers we should like to have, and the beauty and peril and sorrow of the possession of these things is exhibited in them..... (Letters 189).

Whether Men and Elves are different races, is not, then, what Tolkien sees as important. The reason for creating Men and Elves as different races is, in this case, rather rooted in his sub-creation theory and what he writes of in his essay "On Fairy Stories". He employs the possibilities that the world of fantasy open up in order to present to the reader different sides of human nature. Instead of presenting humans, as found in the primary world, with certain inherent traits, fantasy makes it possible to create different races in the secondary world to illuminate different aspects of humanity. Tolkien declares that: "…fairy-stories deal largely, or (the better ones) mainly, with simple and fundamental things, untouched by Fantasy, but these simplicities are made all the more luminous by their setting" (Fairy Stories 147). These simple and fundamental things that Tolkien illuminates through the descriptions of Elves and Men are many. The main lesson, as we have seen in the previous chapters as well, is that one should accept one's faith and one's position within God's creation.

Within Tolkien's secondary world, there is one major intrinsic difference between Elves and Men that makes a marriage between people of the two races almost impossible: their relationship to mortality, rooted in their different relationships to Arda, or earth. Both races are "the Children of Ilúvatar", that is; brought onto Arda by Eru, or Ilúvatar - the One. The Elves are called the Firstborn, as they came first to Arda, while Men are called the Secondborn, as they came second. The Elves of Middle-earth are "bound to this world, never to leave it so long it lasts, for its life is theirs" (Si 316), hence they are immortal, while Men have been given "the gift of Ilúvatar to Men" (221): mortality. This does not however mean that Elves have to stay on Middle-earth forever, but rather than dying and leaving the world

(Si 36) as Men do, they can leave for the Undying Lands and the Halls of Mandos, but will remain upon Arda until the very end. Tolkien talks of mortality and immortality as "part of what we might call the biological and spiritual *nature* of the Children of God, Men and Elves" (Letters 204). But the reader is also reminded that "in Tolkien's stories each kindred may envy the other, humans wishing for Elvish immortality while the Elves may long for the release of death" (West 322).

To yearn for the gifts of others, instead of cherishing your own, is presented to the reader as a weakness in Tolkien's works. It is the want of the immortality of the Elves that leads to the doom of the Númenóreans in *The Silmarillion*, as they are persuaded by Sauron that the Valar are keeping immortality from them. This is recounted in the story of "The Downfall of Númenor", or the "Akallabêth" in *The Silmarillion*. The three Houses of Men that fought side by side with the Elves against Morgoth in the First Age, were rewarded "for their valour and faithful alliance, by being allowed to dwell 'westernmost of all mortals', in the great 'Atlantis' isle of *Númenore*" (150-51) by the Valar. They were also rewarded with "wisdom and power and life more enduring than any others of the mortal race" (Si 310). They were still mortals, however, and not allowed to sail to the Undying Lands - the lands of the Valar. Their downfall was brought about by their "desire of everlasting life, to escape from death and the ending of delight" (315). As they were yearning for immortality, rather than accepting with appreciation the Gifts they had been given, they broke the Ban of the Valar and tried to sail west to the Undying Lands. Tolkien notes in his essay "On Fairy-Stories", that "the oldest and deepest desire" is "the Great Escape: the Escape from Death" (153). The flaw of the Men of Númenor lead to the flooding of the Kingdom of Númenor. Only a few who were opposed to the idea of sailing west, such as the ancestors of Aragorn, survived. In trying to gain immortality, the majority of the Númenoréans instead faced death as a repercussion of their greed for life. As Aragorn is a descendant of the Men of Númenor who

escaped the drowning, he lives longer than most mortals, but not long enough in the eyes of Arwen.

There is no concrete example of Elves pursuing mortality in the legendarium, but their "fading" as time goes by, and their nostalgia shows that they grow weary of the world if they live in it for too long (Si 36), and might thus be envious of the Gift of Men. As Paul Kocher puts it: "Each species yearn to have the gift of the other, but would not like it if once achieved" (123). It is, then, not only Men who are tempted to go beyond the limits of one's inherent nature in Middle-earth. The Elves have the immortality that the Men of Númenor coveted, but this does not necessarily make them happy. Tolkien explains that:

> In this mythological world the Elves and Men are in their incarnate forms kindred, but in the relation of their 'spirits' to the world in time represent different 'experiments', each of which has its own natural trend, and weakness. (Letters 236)

The immortality of the Elves become a burden, as they have to witness time fly by, and the changes of the centuries, while they stay the same. The weakness portrayed with the Elves, is that they "become unwilling to face change: as if a man were to hate a very long book still going on, and wished to settle down in a favourite chapter" (236). Their nostalgia for the past is their main flaw, and as Tolkien explains,

> They wanted to have their cake and eat it: to live in the mortal historical Middle-earth because they had become so fond of it (and perhaps because they there had the advantages of the superior caste), and so tried to stop its change and history, stop its growth, keep it as a pleasaunce… (197).

The Elves do not wish for mortality per se, in the same way that Men have come to wish for immortality, but they grow weary of the world and all its changes. According to Tolkien this is "of course against the design of God" (236), as the changes represent the unfolding of a story

and are inevitable. By lingering for a longer period of time in Lothlórien, Arwen must have felt the bliss of an unchanging world. It seems that in Lórien time is held at bay by the powers of Galadriel's ring, so even she, one of the mightiest of the Elves can not help but to stop the tides of time where she dwells. This is visible as Galadriel professes that if the Ring is destroyed "Lothlórien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away" (LotR 365). This might make the transition to mortality even worse for Arwen, as she now has to face both change and death, with which she is not accustomed.

As a result of this difference in their fundamental natures, there are few marriages between Elves and Men. As the Elf Gwindor told his daughter Finduilas who was in love with the mortal Túrin: "It is not fitting that the Elder Children of Ilúvatar should wed with the Younger; nor is it wise, for they are brief, and soon pass, to leave us in widowhood while the world lasts" (Si 251). Neither Lúthien nor Arwen has to live in widowhood until the end of the world, as both are given the opportunity by the Valar to give up their immortalities. This is a possibility that they gain because of special circumstances, and Tolkien stresses in one of his letters that the biological and spiritual nature of the Children of Ilúvatar "could *not* be altered by anyone (even a Power or god), and would not be altered by the One, except perhaps by one of those strange exceptions to all rules and ordinances which seem to crop up in the history of the Universe" (Letters 204). Arwen and Lúthien with their marriages to Aragorn and Beren seem to be of those strange exceptions. The reason why Arwen is able to give up her immortality is because of her ancestry. Her father, Elrond, is a Half-Elven, and as his brother and parents before him, was given the opportunity by the Valar "to choose freely to which kindred their fates shall be joined, and under which kindred they shall be judged" (Si 299). In extension there was appointed choice for the children of Elrond as well "to pass with him from the circles of the world; or if they remained to become mortal and die in Middle-earth" (LotR 1035). Even though both stories are perceived as sad, which according to Aragorn; "as

are all the tales of Middle-earth" (191), the reader finds some bliss in the final joining of the couples after all of their struggles, and consolation in the fact that that the originally immortal one does not have to live on in eternal sorrow after their partner is gone

It is clear that these "exceptions" to the cosmic order are, for that very reason, of enormous symbolic significance in Tolkien's legendarium. The coming-together of Elf and Man in marriage tends to happen at great turning-points in the history of Middle-earth, and these unions thematise the contrasting, but also somehow deeply linked, plan of Iluvatar for these races. These unions may be said to give a foreshadowing of heaven: an interracial marriage between Elf and Man hints at the ultimate eschatological union of the races at the end of time, beyond the existence of Arda itself. Even the sorrow and sadness that necessarily accompanies them has an element of divine pedagogy in it. A Man uniting with an Elf in marriage is striving to make contact with the transcendence and glory and immortality associated with the Elves, though without trying to possess that immortality inappropriately. To accept death freely when married to an Elf is doubly painful, but it can also become heroic. An Elf who has given up immortality and is afflicted with the doom of Men as well as with terrible sorrow for a lost love is for this very reason able to overcome the melancholy of the Elves: joy and grief in love are tasted together, and both point beyond the limits of the world itself.

5.2 A Mirror of the Past

Given the symbolic centrality of the marriage union of Elf and Man in Tolkien's legendarium, it is not surprising that the known cases echo each other closely. The similarities in the stories of Beren and Lúthien and Aragorn and Arwen are constantly emphasised, and what makes the analogy even more striking is the language used by Tolkien in describing the first meeting of the lovers. In the first meeting of Aragorn and Arwen both the setting and the words uttered

by the characters are mirroring the first meeting of Beren and Lúthien. Both couples meet among the trees in a realm ruled by the father of the Elven woman, and as Aragorn spots Arwen he instantly thinks of Lúthien; “And behold! there Lúthien walked before his eyes in Rivendell, clad in a mantle of silver and blue, fair as the twilight in Elven-home; her dark hair strayed in a sudden wind, and her brows were bound with gems like stars” (LotR 1058). The same words are used in the description of Lúthien, as Beren first sees her in the forest of Doriath: “Blue was her raiment as the unclouded heaven, but her eyes were grey as the starlit evening; her mantle was sewn with golden flowers, but her hair was dark as the shadows of twilight” (Si 193). Most noticeable is the mentioning of both women's blue garments and dark hair, but also the same use of words; such as the mentioning of stars and twilight in both cases. Still, Tolkien has made the two discernible, as Arwen is clad in silver and blue, while Lúthien is clad in blue with golden flowers. It is not strange that Aragorn thinks of Lúthien when he first sees Arwen, even though he has never seen Lúthien, as it is clear that Arwen resembles Lúthien in more than one way. This is apparent from the descriptions of the two, as well as the fact that Arwen tells Aragorn that he is not the first to have said that she walks in the likeness of Lúthien (LotR 1058). Arwen's insight that “maybe my doom will not be unlike hers” (1058) may come from the realization that her likeness to Lúthien is a sign that her faith will be quite similar to the one whom she resembles.

As Aragorn sees Arwen for the first time he is singing a part of the Lay of Lúthien, probably the same song he sings to the Hobbits at Weathertop (LotR 191-193). The singing of this song foreshadows the faith of the two, even before they have met. Richard West states that “in part they come together over their mutual interest in the tale of their ancestors Beren and Lúthien” (323). This I believe is partially correct, but what Tolkien is showing is rather that it is something beyond mere interest in the tale that brings the two together. West acknowledges this to some extent, as he professes that the resemblance between Arwen and

Lúthien “is more than physical” (321) and that “Beren and Lúthien foreshadow Aragorn and Arwen as the first intermarriage between Man and Elf in Tolkien’s legendarium” (321). The mentioning of Beren and Lúthien in the meeting of Aragorn and Arwen is not accidental, but rather inevitable in Tolkien’s vision. This is implied at Weathertop as Aragorn explains that it is said that the line of Lúthien's will never fail (LotR 194). If, however, the last ones remaining in the line of Lúthien do not get any children, the line will have failed. These seem to be Arwen and Aragorn, and thus with their marriage and their making of an heir, they will have secured the line. This is not known to the reader unless reading the Appendices, but then it should become clear that this marriage was almost inevitable. The singing of the Lay of Lúthien at Weathertop and Aragorn explaining the contents of the song gives the reader a clue that this tale will have some significance in the coming story, though it remains unclear for quite some time what this significance is.

The first glimpse the reader gets of Arwen is through Frodo's eyes in Rivendell, and he, too sees that she resembles Lúthien:

> 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, grey as a cloudless night; yet queenly she looked, and thought and knowledge were in her glance, as of one who has known many things that the years bring. (LotR 227)

This description mirrors the description of Arwen by Aragorn in the Appendices, but also the description of Lúthien in *the Silmarillion*. Here Frodo unknowingly describes Arwen in the same words as Beren describes Lúthien; mentioning the darkness of her hair and the grey starlit eyes. Tolkien also makes Frodo notice that her “raiment had no ornament save a girdle of leaves wrought in silver” (227), as opposed to Lúthien who had a mantle “sewn with golden flowers” (the Silmarillion 193). With this, Tolkien is making the two women as

symbols of the Two Trees of Valinor which were lost in the First Age (31). These were the sources of light in the world before the making of the Sun and the Moon, and therefore of great value to both the Elves and the Valar. Making Arwen a symbol of the White Tree or the silver one, Telperion, Tolkien is again pointing towards Arwen's faith as Aragorn's wife. Despite her being an Elf then, subtle hints are there that she will in the end marry Aragorn. The reason why the Tree-analogy is of importance is, that it links Arwen to the Tree of Númenor, the White Tree of Gondor, which is linked with the faith of Aragorn. The sapling of "the line of Nimloth the fair; and what was a seedling of Galathilion, and that a fruit of Telperion of many names, Eldest of Trees" (Lord of the Rings 971) that Aragorn finds after his coronation symbolises that the line of the kings of Númenor is secured. This sign tells him that Arwen is on her way to marry him. All these hints throughout the novel, pointing at the marriage of Aragorn and Arwen, shows that their union was of tremendous importance to Tolkien.

5.3 A Marriage for the Benefit of All

Not all critics have seen the marriage of Arwen and Aragorn as having a happy ending, and some have argued that this partly tells against a view of this marriage as promoting intercultural and interracial interaction and friendship. Hope Rogers and Richard West, among others, emphasise the tragedy in the marriage, and that Arwen's sadness and despair in Aragorn's death is a sign of this. Rogers states that "Tolkien's works repeatedly demonstrate the problems and losses that accompany diversity in the real world and the imperfections of even the best efforts to find solutions" (70). She sees Tolkien as critiquing intermarriage, but at the same time employing it in his writing to unite difference in his imaginary world. Rogers states that "Intercultural marriage's strength as a form of interaction... results not only from the peaceful and fruitful nature of the relationships themselves, but also because it is tied to

the acceptance of all difference" (74). Rogers acknowledges that interracial marriages, such as that of Beren and Lúthien, and Aragorn and Arwen, are fruitful as unions of difference, but her main focus is on the internal issues of the marriages, rather than the great impact they have on the future of Middle-earth. She also does not realise that while Tolkien is showing his readers the grave difficulties that these kinds of marriages must face within a fallen and sinful Middle-earth *as it is*, they also function as eschatological signs, pointing towards a complete reconciliation between the races in the Second Music of Iluvatar beyond the existence of Arda itself.

In both tales, the separating force seems initially to be the fathers of the brides rather than the fact that they are of different races. In the meeting of Beren and Lúthien's father Thingol in *The Silmarillion*[23], the greed of Thingol and thereby the quest laid upon Beren is what is emphasised by Tolkien. It is also clear what Tolkien thinks of Thingol's greed and his inability to welcome a hero like Beren. Through the voice of the Thingol's wife and Maia, Melian, Tolkien openly tells the reader that Thingol has been in the wrong in his decision to send Beren for the Silmaril:

> "Then at last Melian spoke, and she said to Thingol: 'O King, you have devised cunning councel. But if my eyes have not lost sight, it is ill for you whether Beren fail in his errand, or achieve it. For you have doomed either your daughter, or yourself. And now Doriath is drawn within the fate of a mightier realm'" (Si 197).

What seems to be the most prominent issue with the coming together of Aragorn and Arwen, is Elrond's condition that "Arwen Undómiel shall not diminish her life's grace for less cause" than the restoration of "the kingship of Men", and subsequently "she shall not be the bride of any Man less the King of both Gondor and Arnor" (LotR 1061). While the underlying reasons

[23] p. 194-197

for these fathers to impose these claims on their daughter's suitors, may be in order to keep these Men who they see as unworthy away from their daughters, the success of the Men in the quests brought by the fathers, and the ultimate union of Elves and Men in these stories brings something valuable to the entire Middle-earth.

In both tales the couples provide offspring of importance when it comes to the maintenance of peace in Middle-earth. It seems that in times of need, a marriage between an Elf and a Man is seen as especially fruitful. For one thing, it brings the Man to do heroic deeds which he otherwise would not have embarked upon, and second, it can also provide an offspring vital for the future of Middle-earth. Tolkien thus invented these stories of forbidden love, with somewhat tragic ends, in order to show their positive effect on the world as a whole. Beren's quest laid before him by Thingol in *The Silmarillion*, leads to him and Lúthien accomplishing the seemingly impossible act of stealing one of the Silmarils from Morgoth. This, in due course leads to Eärendil, husband of Beren and Lúthien's granddaughter Elwing and the son Tuor and Idril; this the third example of a union between Elves and Men, forged to bring the Silmaril to the Undying Lands, and get the Valar to help in the fight against Morgoth. In *The Lord of the Rings,* Elrond's demand that Aragorn must ascend the throne of Gondor before being allowed to marry Arwen, leads to the defeat of Sauron. Without Aragorn and his actions, it seems unlikely that this defeat would have been brought about. It is clear then that both in the first and the third Age, the unions of Men and Elves led to peace and the fall of the Dark Lord. Perhaps Rogers may be right that the individual intercultural or interracial marriages does raise a lot of issues, but they also serve to bring peoples together against a common enemy – thus shows that difference united is better than separation of the races.

5.4 The New Age of Hope

As Aragorn and Arwen become the new King and Queen of Gondor and Arnor, there is an understanding that they are not just the King and Queen of the Men of their realms, but also protectors of the peace in Middle-earth. Their marriage symbolises a union of Men and Elves, as a basis for that new peace. As Gandalf says after the Fall of Sauron, that "…in any case the time of my labours now draw to an end. The King has taken on the burden" (LotR 983): there an implication here that Aragorn has now taken over some of Gandalf's responsibilities. It seems that as Gandalf's mission "to unite all those who had the will to resist" (1084) Sauron is now over, Aragorn's kingship symbols this union of the races, and it is now his responsibility to "preserve what may be preserved" (971). This is illustrated through his friendships with the rest of the Fellowship, and in that both Elves and Dwarves help rebuild his kingdom (872, 968). There seems now to be hope for peace and friendship between the races in the coming Fourth Age. In the Appendices the reader learns that Aragorn was called Estel by the Elves and his mother in his younger years, and that this means "Hope" (LotR 1057). It seems he was predestined to be a beacon of hope for the people of Middle-earth. He becomes this by aiding in the war against Sauron and acknowledging himself as the heir of Isildur, which makes him able to summon the Oathbreakers[24] without whom Minas Tirith would most likely have been taken. He also provides hope for the future of Men and Gondor by marrying Arwen, and thus securing the line of Lúthien as well as the kingdom of Gondor.

For Arwen and the Elves, the new Age does not bring hope in the same way. As Gandalf tells Aragorn that "…the time comes of the Dominion of Men, and the Elder Kindred shall fade or depart" (LotR 971). Arwen's choice to give up her immortality and not follow her kindred to Valinor is presented to the reader as a doom in the sense of a tragic faith. It is

[24] Undead Men of the Mountains who broke their oath to aid Isildur in his fight against Sauron during the Second Age. They may be summoned only by the heir of Isildur, and for their oath to be fulfilled they must now fight against the armies of Sauron (LotR 781-782) .

important to note that she chooses a short time of happiness followed by death, rather than a lifetime of grief. As such, her choice does not seem irrational to the reader. Her Estel does not provide hope for her, but for the rest of Middle-earth. She however contributes to this hope for the future, in providing the crown of Gondor with an heir. With this, Tolkien does not portray the marriage of Arwen and Aragorn as simply tragic. It is also evident in the last words of Aragorn upon his deathbed, that Tolkien did not intend for the marriage to seem merely sad. As Arwen is in despair of losing her husband, she cries that:

> "For if this is indeed, as the Eldar say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive."
> "So it seems," he said. "But let us not be overthrown at the final test, who of old renounced the Shadow and the Ring. In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory. Farewell!" (1063)

As Richard West acknowledges there seems to be a hope of something beyond the circles of the world – something very like a Christian heaven in which they will meet again and unite even more deeply with each other and with God. West notes that, "The tale of Aragorn and Arwen is tragic, and there is no comfort for such pain within the circles of this world. But it was Tolkien's Christian hope that there is comfort beyond them" (327). The inhabitants of Middle-earth have no knowledge of what happens with Men after they die, but Tolkien implies, as mortality is the Gift of Ilúvatar to Men rather than a doom, that it is not a merely tragic faith they are facing. In *The Silmarillion* Tolkien points towards a Second Music at the end of the World, and writes that:

> … it has been said that a greater [Music] still shall be made before the Ilúvatar by the choirs of the Ainur and the Children of Ilúvatar after the end of days. Then the themes of Ilúvatar shall be played aright, and take Being in the moment of their utterance, for

> all shall then understand fully his intent in their part, and each shall know the comprehension of each, and Ilúvatar shall give to their thoughts the secret fire, being well pleased (Si 4).

Some eternal bliss seem to await the races of Middle-earth in this Music, where all will be revealed – pointing towards a kind of heaven. Aragorn and Arwen's interracial marriage is full of joy, hope and healing for themselves and for Middle-earth; but it is also necessarily laden with great sorrow. However, piercing sorrow and piercing joy go together in Tolkien: they can provide a glimpse of the passing-away of the world[25] and the restoration of all things in the Second Music.

[25] In his "On Fairy-Stories" Tolkien writes of the *Eucatastrophe*: "the joy of the happy ending, or more correctly of the good catastrophe… It does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and in so far is *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief" (153).

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 An Exploration of Interracial Friendships

Throughout this thesis we have seen a vivid preoccupation with the complexities and the rewards of interracial friendships, as well as interracial marriage in Tolkien's works. Despite Tolkien's claim that there is nothing allegorical about his works, this seems to convey a general understanding that difference is good, and that interracial friendships should be strived for.

In Chapter two I have looked at the friendship between the Elf Legolas and the Dwarf Gimli. This chapter serves to show that the presence of different races in Tolkien's works does not necessarily make them racist. Legolas and Gimli's friendship works to promote interracial friendships both in our world, and in theirs. Theirs, as well as the entire Fellowship's mutual effort in the War against Sauron, despite their differences, shows the value of overcoming biases. Tolkien shows that if everyone can work together, instead of against each other, a lot can be achieved. The defeat of Sauron is brought by as a result of interracial collaboration, and this sends the message that Tolkien invented these races in order to show the value of uniting differences rather than separating them.

Chapter three looks into the friendships between the "high" and the "low", the Hobbits and Gandalf. It look at how their difference is status, both racially and socially does not seem to affect their friendship. With this Tolkien shows that race does not necessarily determine our behaviour. Gandalf can be as humble as the Hobbits, and this is what makes their friendship possible. Their humility is connected to their love of everything that lives, including the other races of Middle-earth. This humility is not seen in Saruman, and he is portrayed as someone who takes advantage of his position when it comes to the treatment of nature and other races.

As he mistreats nature, and genetically engineers a fighting race for himself, he is seen as the opposite of Gandalf – not promoting fruitful interracial friendships.

In chapter four the complex nature of the Hobbits is explored. Sam shows biases towards Gollum, and is not able to overcome them until the very end. Prejudice against people who are Other is seen as a general trait in Middle-earth, as a result of the estrangement of the races. With the Hobbits this prejudice shows to be counterbalanced with a special inclination towards friendship. This, as well as the effects of the Ring, makes Frodo able to befriend Gollum, and perhaps is what makes Gollum able to stay somewhat friendly towards Frodo as well. Sam's prejudice is what almost causes a great disaster, but in the end it is the Hobbits' mercy and understanding that leads to the destruction of the Ring. This shows the fruitfulness of understanding people who are Other, as well as overcoming our biases. Tolkien constructs the story in such a way that it seems like the only way for Frodo and Sam to succeed is by their friendliness to Gollum, who can be said to have become someone of a different race.

Aragorn and Arwen are unquestionably portrayed as of different races in *The Lord of the Rings*, and chapter five deals with their relationship and marriage. Tolkien's emphasis on this marriage as well as that of Beren and Lúthien says something about his preoccupation with interracial relationships. The marriage of Aragorn and Arwen serves as a symbol of the coming together of the races in the new Age, and of a repaired relationship between Elves and Men. Their marriage serves as a hope for the future interracial friendships, as well as of hope of peace as a consequence of this.

These interracial friendship that I have been looking at shows that Tolkien created these races in order explore such friendships. In doing so, Tolkien is exploring extended metaphors for human interrelationships. His races must be seen as complex images of the aspects of being human, rather than as a metaphor for racial division in our world.

6.2 The Theology and Eschatology of Middle-earth

Not only do we see this fascination for interracial relationships throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, they are also part of Tolkien's theological and eschatological vision. They point beyond the world of Arda to a deeper unity beyond. The distinctions and hierarchies between his races are motivated by a theological vision where each individual is morally tested, and needs to accept his or her place within the providential scheme of Ilúvatar.

In chapter two this is seen with the choices of Legolas and Gimli. They accept their moral tasks laid on them by the Council of Elrond and Ilúvatar. Neither ever stray from the path nor show any signs of the greed seen with their ancestors. In becoming friends and travelling together to Valinor, they serve as a symbol of the union of the races beyond the limits of the world. That a Dwarf is allowed to travel to Valinor shows that the estrangement of the races is a thing of the past, and that in the new Age, prejudice will be conquered.

With the portrayal of Saruman and Gandalf, as explored in chapter three, Tolkien shows the importance of accepting your place within the providential scheme of Ilúvatar. By looking at how Saruman misuses his power, and how he as a consequence is punished for his actions, it can be argued that it is by an act of God or Providence that his downfall is brought by. The Hobbits and Gandalf act with a love and humility towards nature, as well as the other races. These are seen as core values in Tolkien's theological vision, and accordingly they are rewarded with a place in The Second Music of Ilúvatar.

These values in the Hobbits are also the theme of chapter four, and it seems that without their mercy and inclination to friendship, their mission would have failed. With Sam, Frodo and Gollum there seems to be several acts of Providence, as somehow the Ring serves to work against its own design. Instead of alienating these creatures from each other, it binds them as a consequence of perhaps both their love and humility, as well as Providence. It shows that the darkest of powers can be overthrown by interracial relationships between the

smallest and most insignificant of creatures. Whether there is a "heaven" for Gollum is uncertain, but in the end he is at least reunited with the thing he loves to most, the Ring.

The marriage of Aragorn and Arwen shows that, in Middle-earth, each kind is born with certain inherent limitations. To try to overstep these limitations, and not accepting your place in the world is a violence against God, as seen with the Númenoréans and the "fading" of the Elves. To accept the "Gifts" given to you while showing love towards others is to live according to God's plan, and might give you access to what is "beyond the circles of the world". That Tolkien writes of such shows that *The Lord of the Rings*, is more influenced by his Catholic faith than it might seem at first glance.

Through this thesis I have explored some of the interracial relationships portrayed in Tolkien's Middle-earth, and looked at how these serves to explore different aspects of his books. They serve to show that there is more to the portrayal of them than what have been argued by others to be racism. This thesis shows that his imaginary world promotes interracial relationships, and that his races are created in order to explore different issues that humans are faced with. Tolkien's answer seems clear: love towards nature, each other and thereby God is the cure for any man – whether Elf, Man, Hobbit or Dwarf.

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