Play and Pacifist Space:

Language in the Writing of J.R.R. Tolkien

by

Christina Fawcett

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

the University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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**Abstract**

The work of J.R.R. Tolkien has received a tremendous amount of critical attention that has focused upon his medieval roots or war allegories without considering the political elements of his mythological construction of Arda. Through the construction of a space of Derridian differance and play in the interchange of languages, Tolkien creates an idealized international pacifist system of interaction and interrelation. Tolkien constructed Arda around language and, throughout the narrative texts of Middle-earth, the power of language to transcend physical violence is foregrounded. Language is an alternative to physicality, as power rests in the word. While cynicism and critique dominated the majority of post-war writing, Tolkien's narratives about the communities of Middle-earth defending linguistic and cultural heterogeneity not only embraced the fantasy of Faerie, but also advocated for the ideals of pacifism and the embrace of difference.

**Acknowledgements**

The creation of this document was not a solitary project, so I would like to recognize and thank a great many people for their contributions to the process.

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Lastly, a special thanks to my father, who introduced me to *The Hobbit* as a bedtime story at age three. I can only wonder where my life would be had I never wandered the roads of Middle-earth.

## Dedication

For my family and friends who have made this, and my every venture, possible.  My thanks.

# Table of Contents

**Note on Citation Abbreviations**

| Abbreviation | Text |
| --- | --- |
| *FR* | *The Fellowship of the Ring.* London: Collins, 2001. |
| *H* | *The Hobbit.* London: Collins, 1998. |
| *Jewels* | *The War of the Jewels.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *Lays* | *The Lays of Beleriand.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *Letters* | *The Letters of J.R.R Tolkien.* Edited by Humphrey Carpenter & Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981. |
| *Lost Road* | *The Lost Road and Other Writings.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *Lost Tales I* | *Book of Lost Tales Volume 1.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *Lost Tales II* | *Book of Lost Tales Volume 2.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *MC* | *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984. |
| *Morgoth* | *Morgoth's Ring.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *Peoples* | *The Peoples of Middle Earth.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. |
| *RK* | *The Return of the King.* London: Collins, 2001. |
| *S* | *The Silmarillion.* London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999. |

*Sauron*       *Sauron Defeated.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien.  Great Britain:

HarperCollins Publishers, 2002.

*Shadow*       *The Return of the Shadow.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien.  Great

Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002.

*Shaping*      *The Shaping of Middle Earth.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien.

Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002.

*TT*           *The Two Towers.*   London: Collins, 2001.

*Treason*      *The Treason of Isengard.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien.  Great

Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002.

*War*          *The War of the Ring.* Edited by Christopher Tolkien.  Great

Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

> *There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Iluvatar; and he made first the*
> *Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought, and they were*
> *with him before aught else was made. And he spoke to them, propounding to*
> *them themes of music; and they sang before him and he was glad. But for a*
> *long while they sang only each alone, or but few together, while the rest*
> *harkened; for each comprehended only that part of the mind of Iluvatar from*
> *which he came, and in the understanding of their brethren they grew but slowly.*
> *Yet ever as they listened they came to deeper understanding, and increased in*
> *unison and harmony. (S 3)*

J.R.R. Tolkien, in his collected works, developed the mythology, history and

peoples of his universe, Arda, including the use and differentiation of fourteen distinct

languages, in varying levels of detail. The creation and use of these many different forms

and means of speech is a political act on the part of Tolkien, whose creation of Arda faces

the challenges of war, imperialism and international conflicts. Language in Arda is not

only a means of communication and interaction, but also a mechanism of power and

authority, as each language that Tolkien creates becomes a symbol of political

boundaries. Knowledge of a language proves either one's place in a community, or the

degree one has been influenced by it, thus establishing a link between Tolkien's

construction of language and social or political classification. At no point in Tolkien's

texts does language exist as distinct from political ideology and the construction of

cultural boundaries. Tolkien, in creating his many languages, also created recognizable

socio-political communities in which the language would exist and operate, as the

difference of culture and the functional vocabularies required and mirrored the creation of

language. This linguistic and cultural multiplicity, in the face of the imperialistic and

homogenizing political climate which Tolkien himself knew, challenges the hegemonic

structural tendencies of Western governments by leaving space for each community and individual not only to speak, but to do so in their own tongue.

By linking the linguistic and the political, Tolkien demonstrates that culture is inseparable from vocabulary and the development of a common tongue. The space provided for language in Tolkien's texts and its preservation despite shifting political communities would result in idyllic interactions of culture and semantic play, were it not for the presence of a homogenizing force: the host of Melkor, Sauron and Saruman who are all taught, and forced to communicate with, the Black Speech. The contrast between the singular monolithic language of Mordor and the multiple means of annunciation under the rule of Gondor is a political comment on the positive value of a multiplicity without interference or intervention. The presentation of Gondorian, or Westron culture as a benevolent presence in contrast to the forceful violence of Black Speech idealizes the non-prosthelitizing and non-invasive power-structure. Tolkien represents both the homogenous and heterogeneous linguistic-cultural groups positively, as long as the community does not attempt dominance or oppression over alternate cultural constructions. As the texts progress, Tolkien's idealization of linguistic interaction reveals the Histories and tales of Middle-earth to be innately political. Influence without interference is a pacifist ideal of benevolent leadership and non-politicized interaction and alliance.

Language is a constructed space of play and potential interpretation, as the variety of vocabularies present in the history of Arda and Middle-earth interact and intersect in peaceful forms. The codes and practices of warrior cultures and medievalist constructions are present in Tolkien's texts, as are the concepts of nationalism and

empire; however, both these vocabularies are undercut in the linguistic multiplicity constructed and preserved in the narrative of the War of the Ring. Tolkien's mythology and history not only empty warfare and its terms of valour, honour and bravery of meaning, but they then challenge the concept of success by constructing the willing sacrifice of a powerful weapon as the only means of victory.

This thesis will explicate the multiple spaces of articulation and interpretation through the lens of Derridian theories of language. The use of the concepts of play, differance and supplement in the context of Tolkien's construction of a space of international interaction based around the development, contact and preservation of language, opens the political challenge that Tolkien's work explores. By drawing the lines of power and dominance along linguistic boundaries, Tolkien's constructed mythology and narrative of the War of the Ring become centered upon development and preservation of heterogeneity, the free space between and within communities to accept or reject the influences of external vocabularies. The presence of difference without successful assimilation opens up multiple cultural spaces concurrently. Tolkien's pacifist idealism is apparent in the free interaction of the homogenous and heterogeneous communities without oppression or judgment, without the presence of a singular figure dictating or shaping the thoughts of the community. The one linguistic political force that presses values and language upon others is Melkor and his protégés, who are presented as unambiguously evil forces throughout the history of Arda, and their existence thus provides moral justification for warfare in order to preserve diversity and freedom.

The use of language as a force is present in an organic form in Tolkien's writing, as he mimics or challenges the formation of social groups concurrent with their language. In a text where the primary exchange between communities is not currency but storytelling, history and poetry, language becomes the coin of the realm. As an individual who knew, read and understood multiple languages, Tolkien was well versed in the range of differences in idiom, terminology and ideology existent within the constraints of any given language. While, in reality, the beliefs and social philosophies of any given culture are shaped by philosophers, writers and theorists, Tolkien's Middle-earth lacks these external critical bodies, instead allowing cultural development and interplay to take place without commentary or critique through the formation, interaction and adaptation of language.

Tolkien's work at Oxford as a scholar and professor was in the field of linguistics, particularly ancient and medieval languages including Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Old Icelandic, Old Norse, Gothic, Old Friesian and Welsh (Jeffrey 62). His knowledge of the definition and classification of language through the recognition and establishment of difference would mean that within his creation of Arda and the languages therein he would be aware of the inclusion of differential elements to establish limits between them. The races and communities in Arda were constructed around the particularities of their individual language, which contains elements and grammatical structures isolated from others with a conscientious awareness of that difference. Tolkien's creation of multiple languages and rules of grammar within the context of his own study and research incorporates a sense of difference that is not only present within the language itself, but also in the community which developed concurrently.

Tolkien wrote copious notes and background stories for his creation, Middle-earth, which were later compiled by his son Christopher into what he called the Silmarillion, and are published under the series title *The History of Middle-earth*. These twelve volumes contain stories of secondary characters from *The Lord of the Rings*, songs, poetry and copious tales filling in the details of the early ages of Valinor, Middle-earth and the region called Beleriand. These tomes explicate the minutiae of the history, answering omissions from *The Silmarillion* and describing the development of cultures, settlements, political alliances, wars, peace treaties and other inter- and intranational concerns while also detailing the romances and emotional lives of a few key characters. It is Tolkien's balance between the international perspective and the focus on individuality that makes the absence of elucidated philosophy noteworthy considering the political ideologies and power structures manifest within the text. In all of Tolkien's detailing of the development of cultures, histories and personal stories, there is not a single philosopher who sets foot in Valinor, Beleriand or Middle-earth. Despite all the descriptions of every other aspect of the world, the philosopher is omitted. Instead, Tolkien constructs a collection of races and cultures that appear to develop their own systems of belief, value, power and government as if by either accident or natural design. It is these self-generated ideologies, as well as government structures and power relations, which operate within the purview of language instead of under the guidance of a physical individual. The delineation of political space and power through language is examined under the purview of linguistics, new historicism, structuralism and other critical approaches, but in the application of theory, there has been a failure on the part of

the critics to recognize the value of language as a mechanism of interaction and the space of interpretive play which is at work within the texts.

The volume and breadth of Tolkien's writing has inspired an equivalent range of approaches to his work, which either analyze his personal biography as a motivator for particular pieces within the larger whole, or look to his scholarship to understand the use of mythological, magical or linguistic elements. Scholars who have focused their research on Tolkien's personal history point quite readily to the plethora of Catholica in his work, either in the form of veiled biblical allusions or more open religious citation within *The Silmarillion*, or the values and virtues demonstrated by the various characters when faced with hardship. Others, turning to a less biographical approach, look to the psychological elements of the text as the central touchstone, applying the analytical tools of Jung and Freud to understand the texts as presentations of a subconscious journey. While each of these approaches brings new illumination to the texts, they each approach Tolkien's oeuvre only in a partial fashion, taking a small section or a singular element as representative of a whole.

The most common critical approach to Tolkien's work is the exploration of sources and analogues, as critics look to ancient mythology, early tales and medieval faerie to understand Tolkien's texts. While this approach aids in the analysis of retextualization, the focus of the work has been upon the exploration and examination of every possible mythic reference within Tolkien's oeuvre rather than explication or explanation. There is a wealth of references available, from the early Anglo-Saxon names and language components visible in the Rohirrim to the almost direct quotation from *The Wanderer* in the poetry of the Rohirrim sung by Aragorn (Lee). As the texts

undergo further repeated mining, critics have begun looking more broadly than Tolkien's self-professed sources, as study has now turned to questions of intention (Shippey "Pagan"), structural analysis of the mythic forms (Baltasar, Jeffrey, R. West) or reaching into the myths of the 'South', as Tolkien referred to them, looking at Greek, Latin and early Mediterranean mythologies (Libran-Moreno, Stevens, Nagly, Ballif Staurbhaar). Tolkien drew openly from a diverse number of sources, but the constant reevaluation of the early mythic forms in his work disregards the original story that was the result of Tolkien's labours. Critics such as Jane Chance have released a significant amount of scholarship examining Tolkien's recreation of myth as a key modern literary element, looking at Tolkien's work to be a recuperation of an unused or unscholarly genre, appealing across age, culture or gender because of the use of ancient and familiar literary resonances. Others, such as Anne Petty or Ruth Noel, have dissected the work to explore the potential retextualizations, sometimes offering a number of options for the source or analogue. While understanding the breadth of Tolkien's own scholarly background is a valuable starting point for the study of the mythology created to house Middle-earth, it diminishes the text to treat it as merely a catalogue of influences, and to debate endlessly over Tolkien's choice of myths and mythic principles.

The resounding influence of the Great War, the experience of the battle-field and the exposure of a young Tolkien to the horrors of armed conflict are key motivators in the theory and approach of the historicist critics, who read Tolkien's Middle-earth and its warfare as an exploration of his own ghastly time on the battlefield. The Somme would have provided Tolkien not only with a justified aversion to war, but also a first-hand experience of many horrific sensations with which to create the fear in Mirkwood, Moria

and Mordor (Garth, Bulles). Although this study is an interesting examination of yet another potential source of Tolkien's inspiration, it once again has a heavy biographic reliance. This particular approach, made possible due to Tolkien's vast correspondence, does not allow space for the text apart from the author, but instead binds the two inexorably together. John Garth cites the experiences which Tolkien discusses in his letters, but goes further to speculate about Tolkien's experiences using the war diaries of other soldiers as a basis – thus making a large leap from the particular to the general. The project attempted by the historicist critics may seem to link Tolkien's wartime experience with Tolkien's wartime imagery, but it is actually a psychological analysis of whether or not particular experiences of the war would have made enough of a conscious or subconscious effect upon Tolkien to manifest later in his writing. As a result, the analysis looks away from the text and to the author seeking answers from the writer rather than the work.

More formal analysis of Tolkien's work, seeking out internal consistency, structural soundness and the presence of modern textual and social principles has arisen from the research of modernist critics who see Tolkien's work as a reification of English and Western values in the face of post-war cynicism. Studies in genre, looking at Tolkien's constant forays into Faerie, tend to analyze Tolkien's work along the lines of what he chooses to include, omit or alter from classical fairy tales, limiting the text's relevance to the field of children's literature and playful escapism. Both Clyde Northrup and Valarie Rohy respond to Tolkien's work as a fairy tale scholar, looking to his use and alteration of traditional elements of Faerie for the sake of developing the genre. They then disregard the larger elements of the work, looking only to the comparative structural

values Tolkien analyzed and used in both his critical and fictional work. This ignores entirely his critical assessment of the value of Faerie in his essay "On Fairy-Stories." He points in that essay to the exploration and development of our humanity through the linking of mythology with discovery and play:

> ...if written with art, the prime value of fairy-stories will simply be that value which, as literature, they share with other literary forms. But fairy stories offer also, in a peculiar degree or mode, these things: Fantasy, Recovery, Escape, Consolation, all things which children have, as a rule, less need than older people. Most of them are nowadays very commonly considered to be bad for anybody. (138)

Faerie, as a space and form, is a place of exploration and play, yet critical analysis of Tolkien's reliance on the mythic or fantastic has reduced his work to comparisons of earlier morality tales and children's texts. Other scholars, still fixated on form or structure and textual inherencies, examine the principles of composition Tolkien utilized in his creation of Middle-earth (Brisbois, Drout). Taking that modern preservationist perspective a step further are critics such as John West, Fleming Rutledge, Patrick Curry and Paul Kocher, who look at the social principles which Tolkien perpetuates with his text, arguing that they adhere to the natural flow and progression of mythic hero-quests and fairy tales and reify the dominant principles of the Western, Judeo-Christian social structure. In their study of the structure of the text and the predominance of traditional Western values, these critics disregard the multicultural play of Tolkien's work and the way that it portrays the failures of two components of Western empire: nationalism and imperialism.

The analysis of the psychological elements in Tolkien's work demonstrates a steady reliance on Freud, Jung and the same modernist principles that are utilized by the structural-modernist critics, albeit with a greater focus on the unconscious in the psychological reading, locating the authority for the meaning of the text in the writer's psyche or the collective unconscious. Although the search for archetypal representations does yield a number of compelling examples, the results are as limited as the mythological cataloguing attempted by the intertextual critics. Pointing out various conventional and intercultural figures as they appear in the text directs attention to Tolkien's part in and use of the collective unconsciousness spoken about in the writings of Carl Jung, but there is little which this critical exploration can add to the reading or comprehension of the text itself:

> Gandalf, unlike Saruman, retains his ties with Fairie; he is still one of
> the Maiar despite his human incarnation. [...] The seed of downfall
> is common to all kindreds, and regresses finally back to Melkor's
> original heresy before the creation. Gandalf sees this potential in
> himself (recognizes the negative aspects of his own shadow) when he
> vehemently refuses possession of the Ring. "Possession," he knows is
> a word with ambivalent meaning where the Ring is concerned. The
> wholesome aspects of the unconscious (the West) win out in their
> battle with the negative aspects (the East). (O'Neill 99)

Other studies, looking at the psychological symbolism present specifically in Bilbo's quest in *The Hobbit* see the passage under the Misty Mountains as a perfect representation of one's entry into the subconscious to face one's shadow (Eiss). The

setting of the passing of the Ring of Power from Gollum to Bilbo is an underground cave, at a pool of water, all in darkness. The psychological critics point to the archetypal relevance of these choices on the part of Tolkien as having the transmission of incredible power take place within the physical manifestation of the unconscious. The reduction of the battle scene between Bilbo and Gollum disregards the riddling banter and the use of language as weaponry. The critics instead see the challenge itself as a powerful symbol of self-exploration and seeking understanding, yet cannot differentiate between Bilbo's victory with words or if he had taken up Sting and killed the "slimy thing" (*H* 104). Again, while the analysis provides an interesting metaphor for the journey of the subconscious, it fails to contribute to analysis of the text beyond the imposition of psychoanalytical terminology.

A number of critics have looked at the linguistic systems at play in Tolkien's work. Not only did he borrow heavily from early medieval lexicons, but he also developed his own languages, complete with script and grammatical principles. Tolkien professed a great love for languages and would develop internally consistent linguistic systems as a pastime in his youth, inspiring a great interest on the part of critics to study and understand Tolkien's feelings about his characters based on the traits of the language which he fashioned for them. Taking apart the language and looking at the components which have been used, critics have drawn conclusions about the character, the role and the development of the story that are encoded in the name, as David Lyle Jeffrey does with the character of Aragorn:

> "Aragorn" is a name carefully compounded from elements which are
> highly evocative for a philologist who has studied European languages

of the last millennium. The first syllable, *ar*, is one of the most richly meaningful monosyllabic words in the Old English language [...] It is in the context of all these associations that we being to acquire a fuller understanding of the name Arwen, [...] The second syllable of her name, *wen*, is related to OE *wyn* (joy), yielding therefore "the joy of *ar*" (70-1 – italics in the original).

Without relying too much on biography or questions of intention, linguist approaches to Tolkien's work offers a logical means of analysis, as the texts are rife with languages, either real or imagined, and the play on ancient words and their meanings is a component which makes Tolkien's work so undeniably rich for both scholarly and non-scholarly readers. The study of linguistics tends to overlap with the study of mythology, not only because of the concurrence of the development of the mythological stories with the growth and change of the language, but also because Tolkien's choice of one language or another has been read as a form of citation of the larger cultural background (Metcalf, Provost). The limitation of the current linguistic study is the intent dissection of the textual elements, looking at the minutiae of names, elements of words and the potential sources, rather than seeking a more inclusive construction of language within the text as a central theme and component, as the earlier quotation from Jeffrey exemplifies. Rather than looking at language within the context of Arda, it is removed from the world in which it operates in order to be dismantled.

The religious critics seek out the values and principles consistent with Catholic or Christian doctrine in the works of Tolkien, foregrounding their presence as the central element in the text. While Tolkien himself spoke about the questions of faith which are

present in the text, as he "actually intended it to be consonant with Christian thought and belief" (*Letters* 355), the critical approach still draws upon a single element in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, not bothering to look at values or ethics in the Silmarillion or the various collections of tales. Catherine Madsen, in her critique of investigations of Tolkien's works for sources of Catholica, states:

> The critics who have undertaken to "prove" the book's Christianity have used some interesting methods: they have mined it for Christian content with the same ingenuity their spiritual forbears used to find foreshadowings of Jesus among the law and the prophets [...] These methods strike me as a kind of pious occultism, which takes to uncovering resemblances and correspondences and hidden meanings simply because the overt meanings the critics look for are not there.
> (36)

Madsen herself then proceeds into an examination of Tolkien's work as an example of natural religion, revealing the presence of virtue and goodness in the surrounding world. This is precisely what Tolkien speaks of when he describes Middle-earth "a monotheistic world of 'natural theology'" (*Letters* 220); yet, her own analysis searches for natural, pagan religious elements performing the same act of mining she has attacked, though with a different substance in mind.

The argument goes back and forth between those critics who question the balance of Boethian Ethics with Christian doctrine, the use of the pagan and pantheistic early mythologies paired with comparatively modern Judeo-Christian concepts. Texts like *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues, J.R.R. Tolkien: Myth, Morality, and Religion* and *The*

*Gospel According to Tolkien* take isolated elements of the text, dissecting the larger story and world to point out the presence and practice of virtues that the author then declares to be Christian (Smith, Purtil, Wood). This is an interesting perspective, given Tolkien's own religious practices, but one based too heavily on the biographical. Were Tolkien's faith unknown, one might wonder whether the critics adopting this perspective would be able to make such assured declarations about the presence of virtue, dogma or doctrine in the text. Also, the level of specificity and dissection which are required in order to draw out the virtues in the midst of the plot, character and scene development leads to a disregard of the other textual elements which contextualize these virtues, removing them from their space within Middle-earth.

Despite his own involvement in armed conflict as a young man and his son's service in the Royal Air Force during World War II, most schools of criticism seem to have accepted Tolkien's word that he was not actively engaged with the world around him. On the other hand, historicist and new historicist critics have gone entirely contrary to this, choosing to examine the specific examples of war imagery or the effect which war had upon Tolkien's works, writing a single-minded intention or subconscious response into the text. There seems to be little in the way of middle ground between these two critical approaches that either disavow any examination of personal experience or look at nothing else. Tolkien, like any other writer, was influenced by a multiplicity of sources, including his studies and personal reading, his life experience and his education. As a professor of Anglo-Saxon and a linguist, Tolkien had great familiarity with languages, ancient societies and their mythologies, as well as being a very educated individual who had undergone formal tutelage at King Edward's School and Oxford, followed by his

service with the Eleventh Lancashire Fusiliers in the Great War. Tolkien, then, could not have been wholly disconnected from the activities and interests of the wars as he claimed to be. His letters to Christopher are full of commentary on World War II, the actions of the opposing sides and the political ramifications of one side or the other winning the war. Tolkien was a politically astute individual and understood the interaction between ideologies in the international arena. Despite the presence of this commentary, writers and critics have continued to look to either the ancient mythologies which Tolkien openly retextualized and reinterpreted or ascribed to him a form of repressed rejuvenation of war-time experiences in scenes like the Dead Marshes, the charge of Pellinor Fields or the horrific wasteland setting of Mordor.

While these schools of criticism focus upon either Tolkien's academic study or his life experience as primarily influential in his writing, there has been a lack of investigation into the larger social and political dialogues at work within Tolkien's writing. To look only at *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, it is easy for a critic to see the presence of governments and power structures that mirror the political formations and ideologies of Western countries at the time of the World War II. This limited examination disregards the long history of Middle-earth, which has had a far longer development than what is available to those reading solely about the War of the Ring. Just as the history of Earth and its peoples cannot be captured and explained by looking only at the events and interactions of the World Wars, the history of the peoples and powers of Middle-earth extend beyond their descriptions in the history of War of the Ring. Examining the whole history Tolkien wrote for Middle-earth, including the most widely-read descriptions of the end of the Third Age, there is a similar development of

power structures and political ideas which can be seen in Western society over the centuries. Tolkien created a diverse group of peoples, including the complicated elements of race and species as factors in determining political organization, but he still presents a series of social structures that demonstrate various forms of ideology and power relation.

Critics have approached Tolkien's work from either a perspective of language, philosophy, literature, or history, ignoring not only the political elements of the texts, but also the close tie which Tolkien constructs between language and cultural organization. The linguistic critics focus upon the elements of foreign languages in the text, the potential analogues or sources for various phrases or examine the grammar of Tolkien's created languages, commenting on the sheer number of languages only as observation and not a point of interest for study. While looking to the catalogue of languages and grammars which Tolkien had mastery of or the components of those vocabularies used in Arda is a complex and interesting study, it holds as much relevance and application as the mythological or religious critics.

This thesis will address that lack, examining not only the powerful political force which language has and Tolkien's own political views, but also how language as a mechanism of power in Middle-earth provides the reader with a clear sense of political delineation, through an individual's ability to speak a language or not. The use of cultural and political demarcation through language separates communities and political practices, as the reader can track the traditions and practices of a community through the linguistic contact and influence they have undergone through their history. Beyond the construction of language as a political delineator, Tolkien's advocacy for multiple spaces,

voices and benevolent non-invasive and multilingual leadership is a pacifist idealization of a global political system, a contrast to the imperialism and culture of dominance in practice in the world both prior to and following the World Wars. Tolkien's texts, in their detailed construction and sense of reality, present a non-confrontational, non-invasive and non-interfering ideal of leadership, political interaction and cultural coexistence, all imparted to the reader through the medium of language. The powerful play of interpretation, the constant awareness of differance within the text demonstrates the ability of language to open space for interaction and non-violent conflict resolution.

**Chapter 2**: Language and Pacifist Philosophy in Middle-earth and Beyond

Within the writing of J.R.R. Tolkien there appears a discontinuity or contradiction of values which has either been disregarded or glossed over by critics, as Tolkien's carefully considered utilization of his medieval influences does not cohere with his anti-war sentiments or the linguistic non-conformity and non-invasive interrelationships apparent in Middle-earth. In his archived correspondence, there are countless references to Tolkien's anti-war, anti-imperialist and anti-mechanical sentiments, as he states: "Well the first War of the Machines seems to be drawing to its final inconclusive chapter – leaving, alas, everyone the poorer, many bereaved or maimed and millions dead, and only one thing triumphant: the Machines" (*Letters* 111). Tolkien's regular exposition on the dehumanizing forces of empire and mechanization demonstrates his justified opposition to warfare, a view he held very strongly. Tolkien's writing refuses to be bound by the ethics and values reflected in his medieval sources, but it selectively draws upon the ideals of warrior society to challenge the nationalist constructions that had driven his own beloved country to war. The values of pacifism, a philosophy whose definition has been narrowed in connotative value through its adoption by political and social movements, are found in Tolkien's texts providing the balance and hope to communities constructed from numerous historical and political traditions. The recognition of the importance of pacifism in Tolkien's work opens a whole sphere of social critique and political response through the study of language, its power, its influent and its capability to open spaces of difference in Middle-earth.

Tolkien's education, background, and passion lay in the study and exploration of medieval literature, yet his own writings, while reflecting the tone and setting of the

medieval poets, fail to cohere with the values and ideals reflected in warrior societies. Language, as a mechanism of communication, plays a central role in the activity of Middle-earth and is often substituted for weaponry and physical violence. The sword, as both a literal and metaphoric power, acts as a secondary means of achieving a goal in the key activities as Tolkien's various narrative voices construct them in the texts. Although in *The Hobbit* the hero, Bilbo Baggins, brandishes an Elven blade which he names Sting, the sword plays little role in his adventures other than to provide him with a sense of confidence and security. Although it may slice spiders and webs in Mirkwood, and Bilbo thinks to use it many times, its usefulness as a weapon is secondary to Bilbo's use of and reliance on language. Bilbo only holds his sword at the ready when it appears the riddling with Gollum has dissolved into physical violence, and when facing the giant spiders of Mirkwood, Bilbo chooses poetry and taunting as his first line of attack, calling out "Attercop, Attercop" rather than stabbing one of the arachnids while invisible. (*H* 104, 197). His ability to riddle saves him from Gollum, wins him his safety and the One Ring, and finally provides the method of unseating Smaug from his treasure pile. Bilbo does not even carry Sting when he faces Smaug, but instead riddles and plays naming games to protect himself, while concealing himself with the Ring. Tolkien's authoritative narrator informs the reader that:

> [t]his is of course the way to talk to dragons, if you don't want to
>
> reveal your proper name (which is wise), and don't want to infuriate
>
> them by flat refusal (which is also very wise). No dragon can resist
>
> the fascination of riddling talk and of wasting time trying to
>
> understand it. (270)

It is not the use of the sword or physical violence that Tolkien favours in his children's story, a text which has been continually compared to *Beowulf* by critics. Ruth Noel points out that:

> Bilbo Baggins' confrontation of the dragon in the Lonely Mountain and the subsequent events of *The Hobbit* closely follow the story line of the dragon sequence in *Beowulf,* an incongruous and conscious parallel which must not have been lost on Tolkien's scholarly colleagues. (60)

His eschewal of violence shifts the focus to the power of the word. The refusal of physicality in the face of conflict or threat is reiterated in *The Return of the King* where Sam and Frodo wield words, not weapons, in order to escape the tower of Cirith Ungol, and to break the dark power which held it together:

> '*Gilthoniel, A Elbereth!*' Sam cried. For, why he did not know, his thought sprang back suddenly to the Elves in the Shire, and the song that drove away the Black Rider in the trees. '*Aiya elenion ancalima!*' cried Frodo once again behind him. The will of the Watchers was broken with a suddenness like the snapping of a cord, and Frodo and Sam stumbled forward. Then they ran. Through the gate and past the great seated figures with their glittering eyes. There was a crack. The keystone of the arch crashed almost on their heels, and the wall above crumbled, and fell in ruin. (*RK*, VI, I, 894 – italics in original)

The efficacy of language, whether in song, poetry, story-telling or commonplace communication, is a constant theme throughout Tolkien's writing.

Numerous linguistic critics, while exploring the sense of play and detail of construction which Tolkien put into the many languages he created for his fiction, fail to look past the minutiae of the individual systems to the larger ideal of communication which Tolkien advocated with his multiplicity. The critical exploration of the vocabularies and etymological influences of a linguist's fictitious languages produces an interesting study and, while the sense of copia has been either overlooked and disregarded by most analysis of Tolkien's writing, there have been effective studies not only into the specific influences which Tolkien used, both those cited and not, but also in the central role languages play in Middle-earth. While Judy Bell points to the differentiation of character and space through the separation of 'high' and 'low' grammar and the invocations of names as a potent form of magic, Louise Keene sees the use of language and words as a means of controlling chaos, both in Middle-earth and in his own life: "He felt threatened by events that were beyond his control [...] Tolkien is able to impose certainty, in an uncertain time, through the use of his invented language" (6). Both critics point to the language as a key in Tolkien's system of definition and his act of creation, looking at the linguistic forms and styles used by peoples and communities in tongues either pre-existing or created by Tolkien as a means of controlling the surroundings and understanding the social and political separation of Middle-earth. Mary Zimmer picks up the same concept of naming which Bell points to, exploring the potent magic in naming, unnaming and renaming, all of which she connects to the Christian-Neoplatonic idea that there is such a thing as a 'true name'. Alan McComas looks to Tolkien's use of multiple voices, authors and spaces as a means of binding magic to the word, and the word to the character.

Looking at the perceived connection between word and magic, between naming and power, these critics have identified Tolkien's investment in language and the word as a source of power, but failed to look at the social or political implications, other than Keene's attempt to assert that language was Tolkien's comfort in the face of uncertain futures. Biographical or historical critics, such as Shippey and Garth, see the innate tie between Tolkien's creative tendencies in linguistics and his authorial creation, looking to both his education and his later scholarly work as justification for his propensity toward multiple languages, rather than the advocacy for copia within the text. Tolkien, in his preface to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, states that he feared there would be no interest in his text, as "it was primarily linguistic in inspiration and was begun in order to provide the necessary background of 'history' for Elvish tongues" (*FR*, prologue, xiii). The significance of language as the root and core in Tolkien's Middle-earth is central to understanding the powerful politicization that language undergoes in Tolkien's mythology, as well as the power of the word within the text itself.

From his early children's text, *The Hobbit*, through his epic mythic narrative of the War of the Ring, Tolkien constructs language and the understanding of multiple vocabularies as a mark of power, as such knowledge allows a figure to transcend the boundaries of a given community. In *The Hobbit*, the defeat of Smaug is directly tied to the presence of a figure that understands the language of the thrush:

> Suddenly out of the dark something fluttered to [Bard's] shoulder. He started – but it was only an old thrush. Unafraid it perched by his ear and it brought him news. Marveling he found he could understand its tongue, for he was of the race of Dale. [...] And while Bard paused in

wonder it told him of tidings up in the Mountain and of all that it had

heard. (*H* 300)

Power and authority in the community of the Dale were historically tied to one's ability

to understand foreign languages, in particular the language of another species. The

capacity to communicate with the external world, to interact and represent the interests of

the people, is recognized as a valid aspect of leadership. The theme of multilingualism as

indicative of authority and empowerment continues to be evident in *The Lord of the*

*Rings* in the two most powerful figures, Aragorn and Gandalf. Both characters

demonstrate the trans-border characteristic of carrying multiple names from multiple

sources, as Aragorn is called Strider, Elessar and Elfstone, aside from his lineage title,

"Aragorn son of Arathorn, [...] descended through many fathers from Isildur Elendil's

son of Minas Ithil" (*FR*, II, ii, 240). Gandalf, through his journeys between many

peoples, has adopted many titles. "Mithrandir among the Elves, Tharkun to the Dwarves;

Olorin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten, in the South Incanus, in the North

Gandalf" (*TT*, IV, v, 655). Beyond this, both figures have learned and internalized many

languages. Aragorn, when traveling with the Hobbits, demonstrates an understanding to

the point of translation of Elvish poetry and myth, as he is able to tell the Hobbits, stories

of Tinuviel. "That is a song [...] in the mode that is called *ann-thennath* among the

Elves, but it is hard to render in our Common Speech, and this is but a rough echo of it"

(*FR*, I, xi, 189). The power of these figures rests in their ability to understand, but not

belong to, multiple peoples and multiple vocabularies. Language is a tool, a means of

crossing borders and gaining access to the political and social constructions of

communities, a form of power Tolkien grants to two figures central to his narrative of the War of the Ring.

Looking beyond these early examples of empowerment through language and understanding, Tolkien's writing demonstrates an advocacy of linguistic multiplicity, coupled with his critique of the idea of warfare as a glorious or courageous exercise. Despite being a history of the War of the Ring, battle, warfare and physical violence are described in only five percent of the book[1]. The texts neither dwell on violent encounters, nor revel in the description of bloodshed. Instead, battles are narratorily addressed in a strategic and detached manner. As the clashes of Helm's Deep and Pelennor Fields demonstrate, the power of the scene rests in the anticipation and the aftermath, not in the acts of the battle itself. Tolkien even describes, through the experiences of his characters, the power of the preparatory anxiety, the moments before the battle envelopes them. The descriptions of Merry and Pippin are most inexperienced in battle yet caught in the wartime experience through their respective oaths to Rohan and Gondor. These two characters demonstrate the anticipatory fear clearly (*RK*, V, iii, 774; *RK*, V, iv, 789), as does the narrative portrayal of Gondor before the siege:

> It was dark and dim all day. From the sunless dawn until evening the heavy shadow had deepened, and all hearts in the City were oppressed. Far above a great cloud streamed slowly westward from the Black Land, devouring light, borne upon a wind of war; but below the air was still and breathless, as if all the Vale of Anduin waited for the onset of a ruinous storm. (*RK*, V, iv, 789)

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[1] 44 of the 1006 pages in the HarperCollins 2001 edition.

The language concerned with warfare, in the descriptors of the warriors on both sides as well as the settings of the battles, introduces an evaluative narrative voice that depicts battle with dark and foreboding images, often tied to destruction in nature. These battles do not end with celebration or the recitation of poetry or song, but rather with the narrative voice describing the ""heaps of carrion" (*TT*, III, viii, 532), a term not limited to the bodies of the enemy, but to men and orcs alike after Helm's Deep has undergone the siege. Every battle ends with death, sacrifice, loss, without which triumph would not be possible.

Victory costs dearly, and Tolkien does not write a battle with substantial gains without tempering it with substantial loss. John Garth, in his text *Tolkien and the Great War,* gives a thorough history of the events leading to Tolkien's involvement in the war, and his experiences therein. The evaluation Garth offers, while sometimes departing from pure historicist approach to weave in the psychoanalytic, explores the experience of war as setting the tone for the desolate battlefields and scenes of loss in Tolkien's writing:

> It would be misleading to suggest that *The Hobbit* is Tolkien's
>
> wartime experience in disguise; yet it is easy to see how some of his
>
> memories must have invigorated this tale of an ennobling rite of
>
> passage past the fearful jaws of death. [...] The company approaches
>
> the end of its quest across the desolation created by Smaug, a dragon
>
> of Glorund's ilk: a once green land with now 'neither bush nor tree,
>
> and only broken and blackened stumps to speak of ones long
>
> vanished'. [...] And all culminates in a battle involving those old

enemies, the Elves and the Orcs. Horror and mourning, two attitudes

to the battlefield death, appear side by side. (308)

The ideal, glorious battle culminating in victory and banner-waving does not exist in

Tolkien's narrative works, as his sense of battle and its results seems too prejudiced by

his own experience and beliefs to accept and perpetuate the rhetoric of the nationalist

voice.

The ideals of pacifist activists, that "a truly pacific life is the best protection, so

far as human agency is concerned, which one can possibly have" is found in the primary

goal of the Fellowship of the Ring, namely the destruction of the most dangerous weapon

of Middle-earth (Upham 212). The driving forces in these pacifist tactics are the figures

that are the most 'international': those who exist within multiple communities and

languages and recognize the need to counter the homogenizing force of the One Ring

over the many. The Ring, the objective embodiment of power and corruption in Middle-

earth, is a danger to whosoever possesses or attempts to wield it and is marked as such

with the script of the Black Speech along its inside. The danger and corruption is

understood by Gandalf, advisor to the Fellowship and guide from the Ainur, when the

destruction of the Ring of Power is deemed an act of folly:

> It is wisdom to recognize necessity, when all other courses have been
>
> weighed, though as folly it may appear to those who cling to false
>
> hope. Well, let folly be our cloak, a veil before the eyes of the Enemy!
>
> […] Into his heart the thought will not enter that any will refuse it,
>
> that having the Ring we may seek to destroy it. (*FR*, II, ii, 262)

Gandalf demonstrates the idea that, while others in the Council of Elrond see battle as necessity, the pacifist approach is to see non-aggressive means as the only way to counter an insatiably combative opponent. To refuse the path of warfare, to seek non-confrontation, is unthinkable to Sauron, Tolkien's figure of evil, who knows only "desire for power" (*FR*, II, ii, 262) and thus cannot consider the path of peace. Throughout the progress of the Ring from The Shire to its eventual destination in Mount Doom, numerous individuals are tested with the offer of power to use in battle, to face the enemy with his own weapon. The decision has two outcomes, to either attempt to embrace the power of the One, the physical weapon, and be destroyed by it, as Boromir nearly was had he claimed the ring, or to deny it and accept limitations of non-confrontation, as typified by the response of Galadriel: "'I pass the test, [...] I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel'" (*FR* II, vii, 357). The choice lies between the willingness to dominate and the acceptance of one's place in a larger community, to take the place of the One or to defend the needs of the many.

The only way to defeat the enemy of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth is to destroy the weapon, to preserve the diverse communities' freedom of individuality through the destruction of the homogenizing force and its physical manifestation. The only way to destroy the weapon is through physical sacrifice, both by the ring-bearer and his companions. Throughout this journey Tolkien constructs situations where language is used as a force, as with Sam breaking the Watchers' gaze at Cirith Ungol (*RK*, VI, I, 894), but also times when pacifist actions are taken directly in opposition to the medieval sources Tolkien drew from. Aragorn, in his first act as a military leader in the realm of

Gondor, willingly puts his life and the lives of his troops at risk in what is tactically a suicide mission for the sense of greater good:

> We must make ourselves the bait, [...] We must walk open-eyed into that trap, with courage, but small hope for ourselves. For, my lords, it may well prove that we ourselves shall perish utterly in a black battle far from the living lands; so that even if Barad-dur be thrown down, we shall not live to see a new age. But this, I deem, is our duty. (*RK*, V, ix, 862)

His act is not one of aggression or physical contest, but rather a tactical act of distraction, a sacrifice to gain and hold the attention of an enemy without hope of true military confrontation. He achieves such a distraction through a show of force and, upon arriving at the Black Gates, through the concealment of his most fearful weapon: speech.

When challenged by the Mouth of Sauron at the Black Gates, "Aragorn said naught in answer, but he took the other's eye and held it [...] but soon, though Aragorn did not stir nor move hand to weapon, the other quailed and gave back as if menaced with a blow. 'I am a herald and ambassador, and may not be assailed!'" (*RK* V, x, 870). Aragorn knows the power of the word, and his refusal to use his weapon when faced with the enemy causes greater fear in the herald than had his sword been drawn. Instead, Gandalf speaks to the herald, acting as Aragorn's voice. Aragorn does not address the herald, never speaking to the enemy who comes out to taunt him at the Gates, because his silence, his refusal to reveal his strength and enter into the challenge, is more unnerving because in heraldic exchange the only weapon available is speech. Although Gandalf and Aragorn use the traditional form of the medieval boast, both in physical show and

heraldic act to draw the eye of the enemy, they have no intention of fulfilling the assertions made. Making empty boasts and promising that which cannot be fulfilled would result in the loss of honour in a traditional warrior society; however, the unfulfilable boast is part of Aragorn's plan. This strategy is contrary to the ideals of warrior society, where physical prowess and the ability to overcome devastating odds in military conquest was a means of gaining immortality, as explained by Leo Carruthers in his analysis of *Beowulf*: "The aim of the Germanic warrior is to build his reputation as a hero, in order to be remembered after death. A hero needs to persevere in order to achieve eternal glory" (25). Aragorn, as the heir to the throne of Gondor, should traditionally uphold these values. Instead, he counters the ideal of the Germanic warrior, seeking peace and stability over victorious battle or glorious death. To recognize the medieval influence in Tolkien's work, the strong ties between the various cultures he studied and his creation, is to recognize the shift in ideal and ethic of the narrative voices in Tolkien's history of Arda and the events of Middle-earth.

Tolkien's understanding and love of medieval texts is the focus of much critical work, as he delved deeply into the voices of ancient poets and narrators in order to draw the textual richness and history into his own work. The prominence of medieval influences in Tolkien's work has lead to volumes of critical analysis studying his use of particular poems, characters or thematic constructs. An understanding of the source materials, specifically the values and principles active in the medieval texts, provides a basis for the reading of retextualizations and shifts. Critics in this study uncover valuable ties, as Donovan's exploration of the Valkyrie character in Tolkien's work

provides interesting insight on the characteristics Tolkien has chosen to draw from

medieval texts:

> Like the valkyrie-associated Wealhtheow in *Beowulf*, Tolkien's
>
> Galadriel is "the ideal queen, [who] reigns over a hall resplendent with
>
> light" (Damico, *"Beowulf's" Wealhtheow*).  Galadriel rules her Elven
>
> environment with similar composure and resplendence, enhanced by
>
> allusions to light and radiance common in valkyrie imagery.  (112)

In drawing the poetic tropes from medieval literature into his own work, Tolkien makes

present to the reader the strong traditions and body of literature in which these characters

found their genesis.

The error in most critical approaches to Tolkien's work is to only explore the use

of certain characteristics, rather than the omission of particular traits and ideals from the

retextualized character or theme.  Although critics draw great understanding from

Tolkien's modernization and diversification of the "Wild Man" stock character, as

Flieger does in her deconstruction of the traits of characters as diverse as Beorn, Ghan-

Buri-Ghan, Turin Turambar as well as more central figures like Gollum and Strider in

their representation of wildness and non-civilized behaviour, or note the powerful

rephrasing of *The Seafarer*'s imagery, as in Wilcox's argument, there is a failure to

acknowledge the shift in tone and presentation.  Part of this is the individual theoretical

approach which each author uses, as notable in Garth, who denies an underlying

philosophy in Tolkien's works, seeing instead his challenge to modern society in his

recreation of the medieval world:

No manifesto fired Tolkien's mythology; instead a particular 'vision

of life' that was bound up with physical rather than political geography

[…] If anything, by harking back to the common origins of the English

and German languages and traditions, and by focusing on decline and

fall, the mythology ran counter to wartime jingoism. (Garth 230)

Garth concludes that Tolkien's texts ran counter to the nationalist pedagogy, but believes

this is enabled by his return to the medieval, rather than by his retextualizing and

reforming of individual characters and themes. By focusing on philological or historical

elements, critics choose to ignore the political argument, the abstentions, the chosen

inclusions or omissions that make Tolkien's work, not only a response to the medieval

texts which he drew upon or a different stream from the nationalist rhetoric, but also a

clear challenge to the "wartime jingoism" that surrounded him.

The use of medieval characters, societies, traditions and languages in Tolkien's

work does not convey the focus on battle and bloodshed of medieval warrior societies,

where physical contest played a large role in the exchange of ideas and the preservation

of order, but rather challenges that concentration through a focus on negotiation,

interaction and the avoidance of physical conflict. The code of honour and system of

valour in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic literature understood the primary social currency to

be brave deeds and acts of physical strength, as those medieval societies were under the

constant threat of war and invasion. To gain renown for themselves or for their leader,

individuals would seek out battles and physical contests. Immortality was based on

earthly achievement and the honour warriors garnered for themselves in their mortal

deeds. This is aptly demonstrated in *The Nibelungenlied*, as the Burgundians battle the

Anglo-Saxons: "they hacked many a gaping wound, until the blood ran down over the saddles. This was how the brave and good knights strove to accumulate honour" (19). Admiration, glory and renown through bravery and strength in battle are central to Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Scandinavian conceptions of 'hero', known to Tolkien and his writings. The primary drive of Tolkien's heroes, however, is not personal glory or renown, but lasting peace, international stability and the prevention of future conflicts. Garth explores the challenge that Tolkien presents to the traditional nationalist dogma proliferated during the war through his use of the voices of his narrators and characters. Tolkien's trust in the voices within his work takes the power away from a singular narrator, a definitive authority within the scope of the work as Garth describes:

> Tolkien eschewed polemical rhetoric, part of the evil of tyranny and
> orthodoxy that he opposed. In his work, a multitude of characters
> speak in diverse voices, but the author stays well out of sight. […]
> Tolkien moved away from the idea of monopoly [of censorship]
> altogether, telling his Lost Tales through multiple narrators (rather as
> Iluvatar in 'The Music of the Ainur' allows his seraphic choirs to
> elaborate his themes). (301)

The power of the many, the value of multiplicity and the challenge to hegemony are all a part of Tolkien's works, akin to the philosophies found in the social dissenters of the pacifist movement.

The culture of pacifism, prevalent in England both during World War I and leading up to World War II, gave voice to a number of the philosophies demonstrated by Tolkien's characters and the ideal of international cooperation made possible through the

construction of Middle-earth. There are critics who look to Tolkien's life and experiences as statements of his personal philosophies, as Rutledge does: "Tolkien was not a pacifist; he fought in the infamous trenches of the Somme in the first World War, and his son Christopher was in the R.A.F. in the second" (14). This approach not only relegates the idea of pacifism to conscientious objection, but ignores the powerful messages found in Tolkien's creation of Middle-earth. Frodo, after seeing desolation and death all across Middle-earth, returns to the Shire and still holds to his non-violent values: "No hobbit has ever killed another on purpose in the Shire, and it is not going to begin now. And nobody is to be killed at all, if it can be helped" (*RK*, VI, viii, 983). He tries to preserve the space apart from warfare and death, maintaining that the community does not need to partake in conflicts that have occurred elsewhere, as they can negotiate and use means other than violence to bring about the change they need in the Shire.

The ideal of non-conflict appears in the social writings of England from the 1870s through both world wars, though the direction of these groups had a greater focus on non-participation and peaceful protest rather than on the power of the word as Tolkien did. Communities like the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), the No-Conscription Fellowship, the Quakers, the Conscientious Objectors and those who were not active in any group but held to the beliefs that warfare was unnecessary challenged the national ideals that had driven the country to the point of international conflict and eventually war. The publication of pamphlets such as the "Repeal the Act" pamphlet in response to the "Bachelor Bill" of 1916 were signed by a great number of public figures in the No-Conscription Fellowship, who opposed the idea of forced duty and the subjection of men to war against their ethics or values:

> We cannot assist in warfare. War, which to us is wrong. War, which
> the peoples do not seek, will only be made impossible when men, who
> so believe, remain steadfast to their convictions. Conscience, it is true,
> has been recognised in the Act, but it has been placed at the mercy of
> tribunals. We are prepared to answer for our faith before any tribunal,
> but we cannot accept any exemption that would compel those who
> hate war to kill by proxy or set them to tasks which would help in the
> furtherance of war. ("Repeal")

In the writings of philosophers and critics such as Fenner Brockway or J. Middleton
Murry, the presentation of the national ideal as a justification for warfare and
international conflict was insufficient. As Fenner Brockway published in the August 6th
1914 "Labour Leader":

> Workers of Great Britain, you have no quarrel with the workers of
> Europe. The quarrel is between the RULING classes of Europe.
> Don't make their quarrel yours....The future is dark, but in the
> solidarity of the workers lies the hope which shall, once again, bring
> light to the peoples of Europe. ("War")

The sense that socially, workers had more in common across national boundaries rather
than with higher classes within their own nation-state undercut the concept of patriotism
in the nationalist war effort. Though the use of publications and public forums to forward
the ideals of the pacifist communities was common within the specific nations, the
individual philosophers failed to make the connection between international negotiation
and stability, communication and interaction, language and peace.

There are common misconceptions about the idea and practice of pacifism, both during the war years and in contemporary connotations of the word, the term pacifist extended beyond religious groups or conscientious objectors. The definition of pacifism before and after the World War I, despite other revisions, remained without substantial alteration, as the 1914 and 1933 textual addenda stated that pacifism is a doctrine in which the maintenance of a peaceful state on an international level is both "desirable and possible" (Ceadel 4). The idea of conscientious objection, religious belief and even public organization is not innately present in the idea of pacifism, which is merely the belief that it is for the best to avoid international conflicts. The means by which peace should be reached is not implicit in the definition, leaving the method open to interpretation. Although Tolkien came to the conclusion that language and communication was central, others advocated non-cooperation, while others supported the war effort in non-aggressive means as an example of patriotic service without feeling they were compromising their values. Non-combat roles played a significant part in World War I, as over 3000 of the approximately 16, 000 registered conscientious objectors participated in the war-effort in units such as the Non-Combatant Corps (Brock 251). The idea of non-cooperation, to put an end to action or activity on the part of the government through passive protest, was advocated in these situations by writers like Fenner Brockway, who looked to the Indian response to the British as exemplary: "This pacifist method of resistance to tyranny has enormous potentialities, but before it can be completely applied those who are asked to practice it must be educated to an understanding of its significance" ("Noncooperation" 127). To gather such support from an educated and pacifist population was unlikely in Western states where diverse interests

drove the war-effort, not just nationalistic or imperialist motivations. Yet, the philosophical and moral standpoint of pacifists was still pervasive throughout non-activists and non-objectors, as is evident in the anti-war sentiments found in Tolkien's writing.

Tolkien's construction of a space of linguistic interaction and "play" leaves space for ideals beyond the medieval concepts of social structure and interaction, and beyond the nationalist ideals which drove the battles of World War I and II. The challenge to both ancient constructions of warfare and valour and the modern constructions of nationality and social responsibility in Tolkien's writing appear in the space of Middle-earth, an idealistic international system where nations interact on linguistic and political levels with little intervention or interference in one another's social activity, where language is transmitted through contact and is accepted rather than forced, and the only just war is one to preserve diversity, not impose hegemony. Through an exploration of the play and interaction of language in Tolkien's mythology using the theoretical work of Jacques Derrida, as the following analysis will undertake, the international interaction and cooperation of language in Middle-earth can be explicated and applied to the pacifist model Tolkien sought. Each community develops an individual system of political operation based on their distinct social needs, creating or adopting laws and traditions only as befits the community. Tolkien's construction of an international system not driven by appropriation or nationalist conflict challenges both the warrior society of his studies and patriotic political ideology of his home. The power of language, as a weapon and means of political assertion, acts as the mechanism for the creation of space for different voices, views and political frameworks. While there is no single narrative voice

that carries through Tolkien's work, there is also no single point of view adopted, nor any single outlook on the events that take place. Every voice which will recognize the right of others to exist is accepted, creating a system of political and linguistic interaction which counters the international system to which Tolkien was subject.

**Chapter 3**: Language and Culture in Middle-earth

The simultaneous presence of different vocabularies in Tolkien's work balances the values and ideas of two separate philosophies within a single text. The use of Derridian theory as a means of exploring the text reveals the potential play of absent and present elements of the pacifist and medievalist values in the language and construction of power in Middle-earth. The Derridian concept of "play" as a measure of the differences and multiple levels of meaning present within a single word or phrase is a valuable tool when looking at the overlapping vocabularies used as the point of common exchange between Tolkien's various peoples. In his construction of Middle-earth, Tolkien based the creation of races and communities around language as a mechanism of both definition and differentiation. His attention to linguistic detail reveals how the social and political behaviours of the various peoples are bound by exchanges of language. Due to this careful intertwining on the part of Tolkien, the social structure and interaction of the peoples of Middle-earth can be explored through a Derridian reading of language and linguistic theories. The balance of the numerous communities described in the narrative Tolkien constructed is visible through the exploration of play and differance in the interactions of the peoples of Middle-earth. The space for interaction and communication is created in the play between languages and peoples in Tolkien's texts.

The use of Derridian concepts of language such as play, differance and supplement is a means of accessing pacifist constructions in Tolkien's texts. Play in Derridian linguistic theory presents the idea that words are read and destabilized not only by the systems of signification present to the text, but also those that are not. "The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a

system of differences and the movement of a chain. Play is always play of absence and presence" ("Structure, Sign and Play" 292). The space of play is made possible through the denial of the centre, the refusal to accept the false construction of an arbitrary authority. Derrida, in "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," addresses the construct of the centre, a point of origin as a mechanism enabling the interaction of elements within a given structure, but also a force of limitation that restricts the play of said elements:

> … the center of the structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. […] Nevertheless, the center also closes off the play which it opens up and makes possible. As center, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. (278-9, italics in original)

Within a given system of language and interpretation there is space for play and for shifts in meaning through substitution, correlation and interaction. The centre's failure is its absence from the system itself, its externality to the system it is supposed to stabilize and define. It is when one recognizes that absence of an origin that one comes to recognize language as a play of elements unrestricted by a totalizing, untransferable centre. This is the opening of discourse, which enables free play, as the "absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" ("Structure" 280).

The removal of a single center or point of origin allows for a play of presence and absence, as the chain of signification of the indefinite sign is made possible through the concept of differance:

...the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the

*spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other. This

spacing is the simultaneously active and passive (the *a* of *differance*

indicates this indecision as concerns activity and passivity, that which

cannot be governed by or distributed between the terms of this

opposition) production of the intervals without which the "full" terms

would not signify, would not function. It is also the becoming-space

of the spoken chain – which has been called temporal or linear; a

becoming space which makes possible both writing and every

correspondence between speech and writing, every passage from one

to the other. (*Points* 27 – italics in original)

To look at the power of play as an infinite series of significations and substitutions in the

absence of a stable or active center, recognizing the space of differance created in the

chain of signification and metonymic correlation, is to challenge language as a

construction. Removal of the certainty of the origin opens the space of play, countering

any single authority that could impose denotation upon discourse.

In the construction of a series of languages and constantly shifting systems of

interaction, Tolkien removes the origin of language in the opening of *The Silmarillion*.

After the initial acts of creation, Iluvatar is absented through the textual history of Arda,

by the different narrative voices. He is a centre external to the system he is supposed to

define, and the construction of the history of Middle-earth eliminates him from the story

after the initial act of creation. *The Silmarillion* is divided into four books,

"Ainulindale", "Valaquenta", "Akallabeth" and "Of the Rings of Power and the Third

Age". The first book, the "Ainulindale" is the creation story, the singing into being of

Arda by the Ainur. This is followed by the story of the First Age, the "Valaquenta", in

which Iluvatar is mentioned only in the first two chapters and becomes wholly absent at

the chapter entitled "Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor." Once the

Edain appear on Middle-earth, their progenitor disappears from the text. Language

develops within the communities of Middle-earth without a totalizing authority dictating

the signs, signifiers and codes of interaction. The lack of a guiding force leaves space for

play of absent and present metonyms both within and between languages. As Derrida

writes in "Plato's Pharmacy," "it is our belief that at their root [the differentiation within

language and in a plurality of languages] are inseparable [from each other]" (89).

Derrida recognizes that the play of terms and concepts within the interpretive space of a

single language is mirrored in the play of ideas between different languages and their

interaction. As the peoples of Middle-earth interact and intermingle, their systems of

language are in active discourse, as interpretation and definition face multiple

simultaneous influences.

Tolkien, in his multiplicity of languages and their corresponding communities,

constructs a world in which political and social boundaries are delineated through

language. Within the ranking order of the peoples created by Iluvatar, Tolkien

demonstrates the flow of power and the tenuous state of authority through his primary

delineator, language. The initial teaching of language is an exchange of power,

introducing knowledge and civilization to a community otherwise uninitiated. Aule, one

of the Ainur, first teaches language to his created peoples, the Dwarves, which becomes

the most prized possession of their societies, preserved with utter secrecy. The Elves

develop their own language, and are shown utter respect when Orome, the Ainur guardian of the sea, "gave to the Elves [a name] in the beginning, in their own tongue" (*S* 50). Their power of self-delineation and expression is legitimized in the act of a deistic figure accepting and using the language of the Elves. The Ainur do not impose a name or definition on the Quendi in a tongue foreign to them. Instead, the Ainur respect their new language and speak to the Quendi in the vocabulary they themselves developed.

The passing of language from the Elves to the Númenórians when Beleriand is established is the construction of a power relation between the two communities, as one instructs the other in the semantics and semiotics of the established vocabulary. The closer link between the Eldar and the Ainur, not only in their immortality but also in their role as Iluvatar's 'First Born' of Middle-earth, constructs an hierarchy of peoples. This sense of deference is reflected in the names the Númenórean kings take on, putting aside their own name from their own tongue and adopting an Elfish title. The acceptance of a foreign name is a means of deferring to an external authority, granting preference to the language of the Elves over the Númenórean vernacular. There is an assertion of autonomy on the part of the Númenóreans in the year 3118 of the Second Age when they abandon the Elfish titles and move to the prefix designator of "Ar-" instead of the Elfish "Tar-"which had been used by all Númenórean Kings up to that time. The authority granted by the Edain to the Eldar in the early days of the First Age is denied in the change from the Quenyan to the Númenórean tongue, known as Adunaic, which became Westron. While it appears a minor change, the prefix is an assertion of linguistic and, therefore, social validity:

> [T]heir men of wisdom learned also the High-elven Quenya and
>
> esteemed it above all other tongues, and in it they made names for
>
> many places of fame and reverence, and for many men of royalty and
>
> great renown. But the native speech of the Númenóreans remained for
>
> the most part their ancestral Mannish tongue, the Adunaic, and to this
>
> in the latter days of their pride and their kings and lords returned,
>
> abandoning the Elven-speech, save only those few that held still to
>
> their ancient friendship with the Eldar. (*RK,* Appendix F, 1102)

At this point, the Númenórean Kings take their authority from their own people, rather

than looking to an external vocabulary and language to provide them with the designation

and distinction of leadership.

Tolkien's pairing of pacifist elements and medieval social and narrative traditions

brings two disparate vocabularies into direct dialogue, as the presence of both undercuts

the authority or dominance of a single construction. Tolkien openly drew upon different

medieval cultures in his work, developing whole communities based upon the language,

social organization and political practices of actual historical societies:

> Anyway 'language' is the most important. [...] Languages, however,
>
> that were related to the Westron presented a special problem. I turned
>
> them into forms of speech related to English. Since the *Rohirrim* are
>
> represented as recent comers out of the North, and users of an archaic
>
> Mannish language relatively untouched by the influence of the
>
> *Eldarin,* I have turned their names into forms like (but not identical
>
> with) Old English. The language of Dale and the Long Lake would, if

it appeared, be represented as more or less Scandinavian in character; but it is only represented in a few names, especially those of the Dwarves that came from that region. These are all Old Norse Dwarf-names. (*Letters* 175 – italics in original)

In his use of medieval social boundaries and traditions, Tolkien does not merely recreate historical communities but brings them into contact with societies that do not appear modeled on medieval modes. Pacifist peoples, such as the Hobbits, encountering traditional medieval states such as the Rohirrim bring the two social perspectives into contact. The simultaneous presence of the two political systems brings both sets of values into 'play' in the Derridian sense, as the interaction of the two vocabularies brings two separate connotative constructions into contact. In drawing on both the medieval and the modern concepts of warfare, the traditions of valour and honour and the critique of nationalist ideals are in contact in the work and are forced to interact in the events of Middle-earth.

The values of the traditional warrior society cannot be definitive when introduced to an alternate set of beliefs with a different philosophical basis, nor can pacifist philosophy present a case for reasonable non-confrontation when faced with violent threats and irrational warfare. In a warrior society, life is temporary but glory and honour are eternal: "The true lasting good in such an economy, the true measure of a life well lived, is the enduring fame of heroic deeds and lordly munificence" (Fulk, Cain 194). Pacifist philosophy sees no glory in warfare and instead holds the preservation of life as paramount. There is no common ground on which the two sets of values might meet, so when a character in Tolkien's narrative enters another community and is exposed to its

beliefs, there is a dynamic interaction between the disparate ideologies. This ideological conflict begins in the early pages of Tolkien's narrative *The Hobbit*, as Bilbo is traveling with the hardy, war-ready Dwarves. Bilbo escapes the Misty Mountain caverns due to his refusal to use his weapon, and his denial of the Dwarvish traditions prevents war, as he gives away the Arkenstone, an item of great value, to balance potential bargaining between the Dwarves and the Elves and Men of the Dale. After traveling a great distance, experiencing battle and being offered treasure, Bilbo accepts only two small chests and tells the Dwarves "If you're ever passing my way [...] don't wait to knock! Tea is at four; but any of you are welcome at any time" (*H*, 351). Although Bilbo is changed by the journey, and he has certainly altered the events around him, his fundamental pacifism remains.

The composition of the Fellowship who will carry the Ring to Mount Doom demonstrates the diversity of peoples involved in the struggle against Sauron, as it is a mix of pacifist Hobbits, warrior men, and socially isolated figures, namely the Dwarf and the Elf. "The Company of the Ring shall be Nine [...] they shall represent the other Free Peoples of the World: Elves, Dwarves and Men" (*FR* II, iii, 268). There is further interaction and mutual presence of cultures in Pippin's song for the Steward. As Pippin takes up his post in the halls of Gondor, he is asked to sing for Denethor and he finds his music wholly inappropriate for such a setting: "[Pippin] did not relish the idea of singing any song of the Shire to the Lord of Minas Tirith, certainly not the comic ones that he knew best; they were too, well, rustic for such an occasion" (*RK* V, iv, 789). The difference between the peaceful agrarian space of the Shire and the war-steeped halls of

Gondor's capital is noted in the idea that one is "rustic" while the other is formal and civilized, one is pacifist and one accepts the burden of warfare.

In Tolkien's writings, these two vocabularies are not only present, but also made present to one another. The introduction of these two philosophies which act as the dominant forces in Tolkien's texts is not a means of dialectical critique, as one set of values is not proven superior through the progression of the narrative. The medieval characters are not shamed into abandoning their weaponry and the pacifist communities are not driven onto Pellenor Fields or compelled to challenge Mordor at the Black Gates. Each set of values has its place and its limits and, in Tolkien's creation of a space of interaction and free-play of philosophies, its potential relevance in a world threatened with hegemonic oppression. The play of the two concepts takes place in the choices and actions of individual characters, that cross political and linguistic boundaries to find a means of resolution to the threat of war.

The intermingling of different systems of thought also takes place on a social level within Tolkien's construction of Middle-earth, as the balance and shift of authority within societies and species demonstrate a tolerance for difference and change. The crossing of individual characters into alternate societies and the shifting of political arrangements both within and between communities points to a fluid hierarchy and a space for interaction and change at the margins. Political power in states like that of the Hobbits is symbolic, but the acceptance of the King's Law is seemingly absolute:

> There remained, of course, the ancient tradition concerning the high
>
> king at Fornost, or Norbury as they called it, away north of the Shire.
>
> But there had been no king for nearly a thousand years, and even the

> ruins of Kings' Norbury were covered with grass. Yet the Hobbits still
> said of wild folk and wicked things (such as trolls) that they had not
> heard of the king. For they attributed to the king of old all their
> essential laws; and usually they kept the laws of free will, because they
> were The Rules (as they said), both ancient and just. (FR, Prologue, 9)

The arrival of the Edain in the north did not alter the behaviour and organization of the Hobbits, but merely imposed an external set of ideals that they could choose to follow or not. The tolerance demonstrated among the self-sufficient communities of Fornost and The Shire takes away the need for intervention, oppression, or the imposition of language and beliefs by one community upon another. This sense of mutual toleration is apparent across Middle-earth, as the Rohirrim are aware of the Pukel Men and the Ents without feeling the need to intervene in their lives and culture. The recognition of commonalities and the tolerance of difference enable peaceful cohabitation and eventually an alliance against a common, oppressive enemy.

Within the communities of Tolkien's work, the ideas of Derrida's differance and play are evident, as the peaceful conclusion of the War of the Ring does not result in a new homogenous social order, but a space of difference with room for interaction at the margins. Tolkien's construction of the nations in Middle-earth is not socially delineated, but defined by language. It is because of this constructed means of distinction that, when looking at the political organization and interaction of these nations, the most useful mechanism of study is not a scope of international relations theory, but rather a study of language and the play of linguistic systems of signification. The lack of a linguistic

centre and the play of different languages during the initial development of communities make Tolkien's beings open to shifts in meaning, form and interpretive space.

The awareness of alternate spheres of understanding, as the different nations interact and develop, is evident in the instances within the narrative texts of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* that language is mentioned or discussed. The most feared language is the Black Speech, which peoples in lands other than Mordor are loathe to speak, attributing to it a form of power. Upon finding the script letters emblazoned in the Ring, Gandalf identifies them: "The letters are Elvish, of an ancient mode, but the language is that of Mordor, which I will not utter here" (*FR*, I, ii, 49). The language itself has significance, even for a figure such as Gandalf, who is not bound to a single cultural or linguistic group. Again, at the beginning of the text of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien constructs a scene in which Frodo comes into contact with a foreign tongue, though it is one with which he has more familiarity. When walking to Bree, Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin come across a company of High Elves singing in the woods. "One clear voice rose now above the others. It was singing in the fair elven-tongue, of which Frodo knew only a little, and the others knew nothing" (*FR*, I, iii, 77-8). The recognition of different tongues and the power which these languages carry is a recognition of difference and interpretive space. As limited communication takes place between the Rohirrim and the Pukel-men, both within the text or within the mythical history of Middle-earth, or Merry and Pippin endeavor to explain the self-definition of Hobbits to Treebeard, the attempt to bridge language differences take place. Cultural groups make evaluations through language, as Frodo is mesmerized by the Elven tongue, with no concern for what is being said, or even by whom: "He stood enchanted, while the sweet syllables of the elvish song

fell like clear jewels of blended word and melody" (*FR*, II, I, 232). The recognition of difference can inspire admiration, as Frodo marvels at the language and melody of the singing of Rivendell, or can elicit fearful aversion, as Gandalf shies away from reading aloud the ancient script on the One Ring.

The close tie between language acquisition and the development of the nation demonstrates Tolkien's use of linguistic space as a counter to political amalgamation. The link between the transmission of political or social pedagogy and the instruction of language has been studied by a great number of linguistic and anthropological critics, as the internalization of vocabulary is a means of internalizing the social norms of a new culture. As Dennis Baron has pointed out:

> [L]iving languages change over time, and while each linguistic
> innovation must originate at the level of the individual language user, a
> variant form must also be accepted at the level of the group for it to
> become a part of the language. Language change and the development
> of language standards are features not only of time passing but of
> conscious innovation and social conditioning as well. (28-9)

The shift in language is a community development, as the change in vocabulary, pronunciation, colloquialism or connotation must be internalized by a majority of the population. As Tolkien composed the histories of multiple peoples to justify the formation, change and amalgamation of languages, he linked the introduction of new elements to the incursion of political communities upon one another. As peoples meet and interact, the languages used shift from distinct grammars to a form of "Common Speech." The Third Age ends with a very clear entrenchment of different language

communities who have chosen not to participate in the Gondorian state system, such as the Pukel-men, and those who will remain tied but not ruled, such as the Rohirrim. Although communities are not forced into political subservience, a separated space is created in Middle-earth, as the return of the King to Minas Tirith does not result in the blending of communities or the gradual formation of a homogenized state. The individual peoples remain, as the distinction of language and space remain in Tolkien's conclusion of the Third Age, though the interaction of languages and the peoples within Middle-earth leads to an intersection of vocabulary and a play of interpretation.

Within the writings of Derrida, the key concept of slippage arises, as the absence of the centre will lead to a slippage of meaning, which is evident in the shifting authority structures of Tolkien's Middle-earth. In the series of power-relationships constructed in Middle-earth, Tolkien does not permit the primary figure of power and authority to remain in a central role. After Iluvatar sets Arda in motion, teaches the Ainur to sing and shapes their creation of Middle-earth, he is no longer an active presence within the text. His role ends after the act of creation, as Iluvatar is removed in the narrative as the centre of interpretation and authority for both the First and Second Born of Middle-earth. As the different communities come into contact with one another and the Ainur throughout the First and Second Ages of Middle-earth, there is interaction and influence between the vocabularies and social norms which each community uses and, as Tolkien challenges the idea of the 'centre' within each linguistic construction, a slippage of meaning takes place. The construction of a structured, coherent universal order appears rarely in the history of Middle-earth and is easily disrupted through the interactions of differing language communities, as for example when Merry and Pippin challenge Treebeard's lists and

songs about the beings of Middle-earth. Treebeard, an Ent and an ancient being, recognizes the transitory nature of not only the land, but also its populations and its language:

> What are *you*, I wonder? I cannot place you. You do not seem to come in the old lists that I learned when I was young. But that was a long, long time ago, and they may have made new lists […] Who calls you hobbits, though? That does not sound elvish to me. Elves made all the old words: they began it. (*TT*, III, iv, 454)

Treebeard's lists are altered by this incursion, as is his understanding of language and the development of subsequent vocabularies is altered. Not only is Treebeard exposed to a new term, but also the concept of self-naming is introduced by the Hobbits, as is the existence of languages based on systems external to the Elves. Each culture has a different point of origin for its language, as some are taught by the Ainur, such as the Dwarves or Ents, some are self-taught, as in the communities of the Quendi, and some developed through the influence of surrounding cultures as the Hobbits have. (*S* 37; *S* 41; S 45; *RK*, Appendix F 1104). The lack of consistency in the formation of language and vocabulary reflects the diverse histories of the peoples in Middle-earth. Tolkien shows an exchange of ideas in the form of redressing language and vocabulary to suit a changing world. As lists and peoples may change, so must the terms used.

The individual communities of Tolkien's Middle-earth interact despite the variety of vocabularies, leaving room for play between potential terms of reference. While Westron is adopted as a common tongue for diplomacy and trade, each community maintains its individual identity as codified in their language. The space between the

present and absent historical, interpretive and cultural elements in each community is a result of the contact and interaction between the differing vocabularies. Derrida describes the need for metonymic association and the interaction of concepts and constructions not readily active in the interpretive moment:

> It is because of *differance* that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called present element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not: what is absolutely not, not even a past or a future as a modified present.
> (*Blinds* 65-6, italics in original)

Each community, in its contact with another external vocabulary, develops a new system of interrelations in its own terms and ideas. Certain concepts and constructions which cross cultural lines, like the King's Law in the north of Middle-earth, have different manifestation within each community. For instance, for Hobbits, the authority of the King's Law has nothing at all to do with the name-sake King from whom they inherited the system of rules, but rather its origin in antiquity: "For they attributed to the king of old all their essential laws; and usually they kept the laws of free will, because they were The Rules (as they said), both ancient and just" (FR, Prologue, 9). Yet, the King's Law to those Dunedain who remain in the north is a traditional code that holds value because

they hope for the return of the king, as the authority of the rule is embodied in an individual, Aragorn of Arathorn (*RK*, V, ii, 757). The Gondorian state maintains the rules under the guide of a Steward, so the term of the King's Rules would be a reminder of the past, national history, without promise of a return to glory or the old way of life, as symbolized in the seat of the Steward: "At the foot of the dais [below the throne of Gondor], upon the lowest step which was broad and deep, there was a stone chair, black and unadorned, and on it sat an old man gazing at his lap" (*RK*, V, I, 738). The signification of the King's Law is defined by the community, through the physical and social separation of space. The active use and adherence to the vocabulary of the King's Law depends on the community, and its proximity to the language of the concept's development, as the Hobbits have the terms emptied of signification because the codes of honour and ideals of behaviour have not translated into the Hobbit vocabulary. A single term passed through political communities carries different weight and value, as each translation is just as valid and erroneous simultaneously and all terms are present to one another in the space of differance.

As with many genesis stories, the first moment of creation in Tolkien's Arda is centred on a speech act, the use of song and the passing of knowledge and a linguistic system from one party to a larger group, generating a system in which there is a deistic centre. This centre does not hold, however, as Tolkien's narrators deny the validity of the origin. Iluvatar teaches song to the Ainur, establishes Middle-earth but then is absented from the entirety of the narrative to follow. "There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Iluvatar" (*S* 3). The text opens with a reference to Iluvatar's name and shows the distance from the peoples he creates. The narrative voice points to an alternate name by

which Iluvatar is known, though there is no further reference explaining whether Eru is a name from another language or another title. The First and Second Born of Iluvatar, the Eldar and the Edain, do not know their creator. There is never a point at which either Elves or Men come into contact with Iluvatar, their creator, the deistic figure who has established their races. The centre of the system of creation and definition for the Ainur and the Eldar, as well as the Edain who follow, is absent. The Eldar teach themselves language in their exploration of the world and come to name themselves, Quendi, "signifying those that speak with voices; for as yet they had met no other living things that spoke and sang" (*S* 45). This name is used by Orome, one of the Ainur, in an act of recognition of the individual identity and language of the Elves. The language, knowledge and culture of the Quendi is developed entirely internally, as they are not beholden to a central authority or deistic figure, but only to themselves.

In the Ages of Middle-earth that follow, communities develop individual means of speech and interaction, either self-defined or guided by the intervention of the Ainur, until their vocabulary is altered by an encounter with a different culture. The Eldar, the first race to inhabit Middle-earth, develop a language and system of naming which is then their means of self-definition, as Quendi. The Dwarves and Ents, both races created by Ainur rather than Iluvatar, are created with the gift of language from their inception. As Aule, one of the Ainur, finishes his creation of the Dwarves, "he was pleased, and began to instruct the Dwarves in the speech that he had devised for them" (*S* 37). They generally do not share this language, as their vocabularies and ideas are not shared outside of their own communities, except with a rare few of the Edain early in the First Age. The Edain, the Second-Born of Middle-earth, learn their language from the Quendi,

also known as the Eldar or First-Born. The Númenórean state, the community of the Edain who encountered and were taught by the Eldar, is established under the Eldar's guidance. The Edain are taught the Quendi language but "even these western tongues of Men became estranged from the speech of Elves, being changed by process of time, or by Men's own intentions and additions, or by other influences, notably that of the Dwarves from whom long ago some Men learned much" (*Peoples* 31). The passage of time and the development of individuated culture within the Edain drive the Númenórean state away from the guidelines and definition of the Eldar, as demonstrated by the shift in language and political association when the prefix denoting leadership changed from the Eldar to the Edain tongue.

The use of language as a means of social and political definition is blurred in the interactions and allegiances of the Third Age. Our first introduction to the Rohirrim, for example, has Eomer speaking confidently about his allegiances and his people's associations:

> I serve only the Lord of the Mark, Theoden King son of Thengel, [...]
> We do not serve the Power of the Black Land far away, but neither are
> we yet at open war with him; [...] but we desire only to be free, and to
> live as we have lived, keeping our own, and serving no foreign lord,
> good or evil. (*TT*, III, ii, 423)

What is interesting about this assertion of autonomy is that Eomer, a Rider of the Mark, is speaking in Westron, the "Common Speech." As much as he and his people wish to be isolated, he has learned the language of international diplomacy and communication, and his statement that his community "welcomed guests kindly" in earlier peaceful years

gestures towards a history of open cultural interaction which has necessarily been curtailed by impending war (*TT*, III, ii, 423). The previous openness of the community, which enabled the sharing of language and the mechanisms of cooperation between the Rohirrim and the Gondorian state, has closed in the intervening years of international isolation, undone by the presence of a threat insurmountable by any single community. Boromir, at the council of Elrond, makes a clear case for the inability of the Gondorian people to hold against the threat of Mordor: "The Nameless Enemy has arisen again. Smoke rises once more from Orodruin that we call Mount Doom. The power of the Black Land grows and we are hard beset. [...] A power was there that we have not felt before" (*FR*, II, ii, 239). The amassing of the power of the Black Lands leads to the council and interaction of many peoples and the formation of the Fellowship of the Ring, a representative group of individuals from across Middle-earth. The threat of a dominant Mordor, a linguistically and culturally oppressive force, demands the cooperation of many language communities for the preservation of their freedom against the Nameless Enemy.

Language is as a tool within the exchanges of Middle-earth used to delineate borders and the inclusion of individuals in foreign communities, either lengthening borders and influence through widespread education or increasing isolation through the limiting of language proliferation. From the moment of genesis of Middle-earth, Iluvatar limits his influence in the new space, as his authority only reaches as far as the Ainur. There is no established political hierarchy under Iluvatar, who becomes an absentee creator. Tolkien's authorities continue to absent themselves after their initial establishment of a stable system. The Gondorian state, as it establishes kingdoms

throughout the northern territory of Middle-earth, teaches the upper levels of each community Westron, or "Common Speech." The individual communities are then at liberty to determine how far the vocabulary and accompanying pedagogy will spread. As Dennis Baron describes in his article "Linguistics": "Language use carries not only the idiosyncratic stamp of the individual but the mark of the nation as well. Consequently, language becomes both a primary vehicle for the transmission of group culture and a badge of national identification" (29). By imparting language and vocabulary, the Gondorian state also shares their cultural practices and sense of hierarchy with the other communities. The Second Age, when the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were in place, saw the imparting of the King's Law to communities across Middle-earth, as the Hobbits, Men of the Dale, Breelanders and other Free Peoples were exposed to the structure and operation of the Gondorian state, as described in *The Silmarillion*: "Elsewhere in Middle-earth there was peace for many years; yet the lands were for the most part savage and desolate, save only where the people of Beleriand came" (*S* 343). Partial acceptance or integration of ideas is a limited inclusion of foreign culture and identity, but not an overwhelming of the local culture and social practice.

By maintaining a linguistic and political presence, the Gondorian state is able to provide protection and guidance to other communities without ever incurring upon cultural practices. The further the language of the Gondorian state spreads, the further the knowledge of the King, the Law and an ordered political community are made available. As described in the "Tale of Years of the Second Age" in the year 3320 there took place the "[f]oundation of the realm of Arnor in the north of the Westlands, with the city Annuminas" (*Peoples* 176). The political proximity of communities to one another

would appear to necessitate a form of interaction, as cooperation and trade could be mutually beneficial, yet communities like the Ents, Dwarves and Wild Men are able to remain closed and isolated by their own volition. All three cultures use geographic conditions to their advantage to avoid the incursion of outsiders into their community, though there are a limited few in these societies who learn the language of trade and interaction and are able to communicate when necessary. By preventing others from learning their language, closed communities are able to limit the potential involvement of outsiders.

In his construction of language to be a political currency, Tolkien creates a system of international interaction that has the potential to be non-invasive, non-dominating paternalism, as the influence of external states is integrated in individual communities by choice. The cooperation between the different communities on a political level is a continuation of the language interactions and intermingling. As described by Derrida in "Plato's Pharmacy," the lack of an origin leaves space for influence without enforced authority: "Differance, the disappearance of any originary presence, is *at once* the condition of possibility *and* the condition of impossibility of truth" (168 – italics in original). The influence of culture through language, as made apparent through the interaction between the Edain in the Northern Kingdom and the peoples in the surrounding communities, is a means by which more politically stable states can provide non-invasive guidance to fledgling communities. The language referred to in the text as "Common Speech" is Westron, the language used by the Gondorian state and its offshoots. This language is a combination of Sindarin, an Elvish tongue, Adunaic, a Northern Mannish dialect, and Dunlending, a Southern Mannish dialect. (Fonstad 188-

90). The language has integrated forms and vocabulary from three major sources, developing through the First and Second Age until it is eventually accepted as the "Common" tongue for international dialogue in Middle-earth. This development of Westron comes during the population migration, development and disbanding of communities of Elves, Men, Dwarves, Hobbits and Ents. This means that throughout the establishment of Eldar and Edain as regional authorities, multiple dialects and languages were at play rather than a single form of speech. The multiple present terms of speech and concepts simultaneously at work are exemplary of the Derridian slippage, as the languages are in state of contact and influence during the development of political and social boundaries, rather than a single dictating force acting to mold the construction of other states.

The forces and figures of power within the chronicles of the War of the Ring do not fit within established or stable communities, but rather exist as marginal individuals who supplement and redefine the distinct peoples. As elements of play and differance are active in Tolkien's construction of language communities in Middle-earth, the most powerful figures in the ending of the War and establishing the ideal international system which concludes the book are exemplary supplements. The concept of the supplement in Derrida's writing entails a revision on the concept postulated by Rousseau, that writing is a supplement to speech. The substitution of an origin of language in the form of writing is a way to fill the existent absence. Derrida points to the supplement as an external entity in the formation and understanding of language, as it does not exist within the structure of the language itself but fulfills the lack in presence:

It is the strange essence of the supplement not to have essentiality: it

may always not have taken place. Moreover, literally, it has never

taken place: it is never present, here and now. If it were, it would not

be what it is, a supplement, taking and keeping the place of the other.

[…] The supplement is neither a presence nor an absence. No

ontology can think its operation. (*Of Grammatology* 314)

This indefinable denial of category is termed by Derrida to be dangerous, in so much as

its "slidings slip it out of the simple alternative presence-absence. *That* is the danger.

And that is what enables the type always to pass for the original" ("Plato's Pharmacy"

109 – italics in original). The danger of the supplement supplanting the absent origin is

the fear of constructing a false centre. Both Aragorn's and Gandalf's appearance in the

texts of Tolkien's narratives are not as false origins, or dangerous supplements as they

refuse in their actions to reflect in a mimetic fashion the theorized origin. Aragorn does

not hold to the traditional values and practices of the hereditary line he comes to fulfill, as

he recognizes the difference between his lineage and his character: "I am but the heir of

Isildur, not Isildur himself" (*FR*, II, ii, 241). Aragorn is constructed as a figure outside of

traditional community boundaries, in lineage and language. As the Gondorian King in

exile, Aragorn lives as part of the Edain community in the north of Middle-earth, living

on the fringes of a number of communities, passing in and out of social settings. In the

structures of Gondor, Aragorn is both the reestablishment of the old hierarchies and

hereditary lines and a disavowal of those traditions, thus supplementing the system

experiencing an absence of origin. As Aragorn is not a return of the original monarchical

leadership, nor a complete alteration of it, he fills the space left by reflecting what is

lacking. Further, Aragorn is a multilingual character, with an active understanding of numerous vocabularies. As language is a mechanism of culture and delineator of power in Tolkien's texts, Aragorn acts as a transcultural character.

Another individual in Tolkien's construction who transcends boundaries is Gandalf, who is described as one of the "messengers sent by the [Ainur] to contest the power of Sauron, if he should arise again" (*S*, 360). In his active involvement in the battles against Mordor and the dominance of the Black Speech, Gandalf has a developed understanding of multiple languages across Middle-earth, including the Black Speech itself. Gandalf moves from one community to another, not bound by borders or cultural restrictions. As a figure on the margins, he too becomes supplemental in the Derridian sense. He acts as an agent of the Ainur, but does not seek to replace their role in the metaphysical constructions of the different communities. Gandalf's role as one of the Istari is as one of the five messengers "from the Lords of the West, the Valar, who still took counsel for the governance of Middle-earth, and when the shadow of Sauron began first to stir again they took this means of resisting him" (*UT* 503). The Ainur send the Istari as a means of countering the power of Sauron, yet through the power of free will and individuality, Gandalf is the only one who remains to counter that power. Sauron the White turns against the Free Peoples, Radagast the Brown "became enamoured of the many beasts and birds" and the Blue wizards "passed into the East with Curunir, but they never returned, and whether they remained in the East pursuing there the purposes for which they were sent; or perished; or as some hold were ensnared by Sauron and became his servants, is not now known" (*UT 505*, 504). The Ainur, even in their efforts to affect the events of Middle-earth, do not impose absolutely upon the free communities, but

instead offer their aid in the form of messengers. These messengers, however, are not bound to the Ainur or their intents, as the originary forces of Middle-earth do not impose their will or control upon the communities of Middle-earth (*UT* 505). In his work in the communities of Middle-earth, Gandalf acts to counter the forces of Sauron. He does so as a supplement who denies the mimetic function, as he stays to the margins and refuses to maintain a space in any community for an extended period. Upon appearing in Hobbiton for Bilbo's Eleventy-first Birthday party, children are excited by his appearance: "They knew him by sight, though he only appeared in Hobbiton occasionally and never stopped long" (*FR*, I, I, 25). Gandalf's presence in the hall of the Rohirrim is occasional and, according to the acidic welcome of Grima, unlooked for: "You have ever been a herald of woe. Troubles follow you like crows, and ever the oftener the worse" (*TT*, III, vi, 501). His transience prevents his entrenchment in a given community, and his entrenchment as a false origin or interpretive centre. Both figures are powerful in the shifting political structure of Tolkien's mythology and both take up the role of supplemental figures to the larger established constructed communities, but in doing so neither character treads the path which Derrida termed 'dangerous' in his discussion of the supplement.

The influence given to hypernational figures in Tolkien's writing challenges both the medieval warrior structures and the nationalist concepts surrounding him in his scholarly and political landscape. Tolkien's destabilizing of the traditional structures of both the medieval and modern nations with the empowerment of marginal figures reconstructs the typical order of hierarchy and ascendancy. Aragorn's absence and return to the throne of Gondor appears on one level to be the triumphant return of the heroic

exile, but in his understanding of language and multiple cultures, his homecoming is actually the assertion of multilingualism and a defiance of nationalism. The differentiation of community and culture through language throughout Tolkien's Middle-earth establishes language's role in the development and perpetuation of a community's culture. The power of songs and poetry is seen in the many tales and stories external to the narrative to the War of the Ring. Tolkien constructs a rich oral culture for the Elves, something only hinted at in the narratives of the Third Age. The transmission of thought, history and culture takes place through the passing or creation of stories, as Gandalf's fall in Moria takes its place in the corpus of Elvish song: "Often [the members of the Fellowship] heard nearby Elvish voices singing, and knew that they were making songs of lamentation for his fall, for they caught his name among the sweet sad words that they could not understand" (*FR*, II, vii, 350). This specific incident is demonstrative of both the power of language and the ability of Gandalf to transcend cultural boundaries in his travels and work as an agent of the Ainur. The empowerment of the supplemental and transcultural figures in Tolkien's narrative and the resultant emptying of the nationalist constructions of meaning creates a space of play within the realm of Middle-earth. The traditional values of warrior culture and the modern constructions of nationalistic imperialism are both emptied of value in the space of difference where multilingual supplemental figures act as points of authority and agents of change within the set structures and communities of Middle-earth.

The lack of a single absolute language provides a differentiation between the Gondorian and Sindarin states and the dark forces of Melkor and Sauron, who have a single language and an oppressive ambition. There is no oppressive, colonizing force in

action when the Northern Kingdoms are being established, or even in the early days of

the Númenórean Kingdom. By writing a history in which most nations do not impose

authority on another culture, Tolkien removes from Middle-earth the threat and

imposition of colonization beyond the demonized forces of Melkor and Sauron.

Tolkien's Middle-earth lacks the imposition of colonial government, or a 'centre' in

burgeoning social structures, as demonstrated in the relationship between the

Númenóreans and the Hobbits.

Although the political establishment of the Shire and the Hobbit communities

takes place under the guidance and presence of the Edain, the dialect closely associated

with Hobbit speech patterns is not Adunaic or Westron, but rather Rohirric, or the

language of the Rohirrim. The Hobbit use of Common Speech is a later development, as

names and proper titles are still in Rohirric, a preservation of their history, and is "a

Mannish language of the upper Anduin, akin to that of the Rohirrim [...] there were still

some traces left in local words and names, many of which closely resembled those found

in Dale or Rohan" (*RK*, Appendix F, 1104). Multiple forces of influence are present, not

a single authority or colonizer. As the Edain establish the boundaries of communities,

there is no pressure of social and linguistic change, as the Hobbits demonstrate. The

"Little People" are not conquered and have little association with the legal system which

supposedly guides them, other than their lip-service to the King's Law. The proximity of

the strong state-system of Men does not alter or affect the socio-cultural developments of

other communities, as the gradual creation of an international language and a strong

Gondor respects the existent communities.

The township of Bree and other communities in the area experienced a mixing of social and cultural backgrounds under the presence of the Edain, but this does not perpetuate the development of a new community or nation. In the communities of Bree-land, there are the peoples who claim to be "descendants of the first Men that ever wandered into the West of the middle-world" (*FR*, I, ix, 146). In the community of Bree, specifically, there are also settlements of Hobbits. The two peoples, known to each other as the Big People and the Little People, "were on friendly terms, minding their own affairs in their own ways, but both rightly regarding themselves as necessary parts of the Bree-folk. Nowhere else in the world was this peculiar (but excellent) arrangement to be found" (*FR*, I, ix, 146). There is still a sense of distinction within the town, a mutual toleration rather than an intermingling and unifying of cultural groups under a singular local identity. The town of Bree exemplifies a space of contact without integration. Though the communities of Bree share the Common Speech, they have distinct linguistic and cultural histories that differentiate their interpretation of the King's Law, power structures and the role of an individual in a community. At the Inn of the Prancing Pony, Frodo and his companions stay a night and sit in the common room as the "Men and Dwarves were mostly talking of distant events and telling news of a kind that was becoming only too familiar. There was trouble away in the South [...] The hobbits did not pay much attention to all this, and it did not at the moment seem to concern hobbits" (*FR*, I, ix, 152). There is a separation within Bree along the lines of the two communities that are visible. Within the community of Bree, the Westron language dominates, but the individual communities carry their historical associations in the understanding of both current world events and common terms.

The primary motivator for political interaction and solidarity in Middle-earth is the opposition to the singular hegemonic force, Sauron, though participation in the open warfare is not demanded of any community. Rather than political power-brokering or the formation of alliances in order to gain territory or influence, the Free Peoples of Middle-earth form a cohesive force to oppose the homogenizing oppression of Sauron. Communities with individual histories, languages and political organizations willingly enter into a cooperative company under the leadership of a newly returned exile king who knows and understands the languages and peoples throughout Middle-earth. Aragorn, who was raised in the home of Elrond, retells tales and relates poetry from other languages in Westron for his companions, showing not only his understanding of other languages but his power of translation and transmission, using different vocabularies and sets of ideas to present stories and traditional verse (*FR*, I, xi, 187; *TT*, III, Vi, 497). Prior to the return of the exiled ruler, the Free Peoples work to challenge the oppressive force of Mordor in various forms. During the travels of the Fellowship, Galadriel provides concealment from the Uruk-Hai to the travelers, as well as weapons, which is constructed as no less a contribution than Ghan-Buri-Ghan and the Pukelmen's guidance of the Riders of Rohan to the Pellenor Fields in defense of Gondor, which is no greater than Treebeard's mustering the Entmoot to action to bring down Saruman and Orthanc. Just as both World Wars were supported by the actions of stretcher-bearers and non-combatant conscripts, so Middle-earth's battles depend upon the aid and guidance of these non-confrontational figures. Each act contributes to the whole, and the cooperation of many individuals is a means of preserving freedom and their distinct communities. The war is not fought to establish Gondor as the new power, but to remove a single force which

attempts to establish itself as a centre. The early days of Aragorn's rule see not the

reassertion of Gondorian presence in the North or over the destroyed nation of Mordor,

but the construction of individual communities:

> ...embassies came from many lands and peoples, from the East and the
>
> South, and from the borders of Mirkwood, and from Dunland in the
>
> west. And the King pardoned the Easterlings that had given
>
> themselves up, and sent them away free, and he made peace with the
>
> peoples of Harad; and the slaves of Mordor he released and gave to
>
> them all the lands about Lake Nurnen to be their own. (*RK*, VI, v, 947)

Aragorn establishes his control within his own community, not looking to the conquered

territory to extend his rule. The Gondorian state thus takes a position as one power

among many, without attempting to enforce authority in other lands and peoples.

The end of the War of the Ring does not result in the opening of closed

communities or the homogenization of open communities, but rather the alliance of the

Free Peoples is a means of preserving difference and maintaining the space of play

between communities. The linguistic structures of the Middle-earth communities are not

altered by the events of the War of the Ring. The Hobbits, who are a community open to

the influences and vocabularies of foreign communities, remain open at the end of the

War of the Ring. While the Hobbits may have an entrenched past of their own, as

constructed by Tolkien in the preface "Concerning Hobbits" which sets the tone of *The

Lord of the Rings*, they are still a community open to interaction and influence when the

War has ended. The introduction of Sharkey, or Saruman, into the Shire after the War

has ended presents not only the incursion of violence upon the community, but also

presents the potential for organized rebellion to authority on the part of the Hobbits. Although Merry is confident that the potential was there already, the act of ordered warfare is foreign to the Hobbits: "Wake all our people! They hate all this, you can see [...] But Shire-folk have been so comfortable so long they don't know what to do. They just want a match, though, and they'll go up in fire" (*RK* VI, viii, 983). The community is affected not only by the incursion of Saruman, but also by the return of Hobbits with "bright swords and grim faces" (*RK*, VI, viii, 982). The King's Law remains in place, the space of interpretation and difference still exists and the return of Bilbo, Frodo, Merry, Pippin and Samwise introduce to the community new concepts of warfare and social structure.

The Elvish communities, in their withdrawal from Middle-earth, continue to act as distant influence on the language structures and traditional modes of communication. While not an active force in the formation of language communities in Middle-earth, the role of the Elvish vocabularies in the history of Arda is understood by the narrative voices of Tolkien's tales. When Bilbo first sees Smaug's horde in the Lonely Mountain in *The Hobbit*, he is struck dumb: "To say that Bilbo's breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words left to express his staggerment, since Men changed the language that they learnt of elves in the days when all the world was wonderful" (*H* 261). The Elves are no longer actively involving themselves in the subsequent communities of Middle-earth, but their presence is felt both before and after the War of the Ring. The Dwarves, closed before the War, remain so after the King has been returned to his place in Gondor. Gimli, when parting at the end of the book, cannot promise his reunion with other members of the Fellowship: "We will come, if our own

lords allow it" (*RK*, VI, vi, 959). The War has preserved the balance and freedom of each community, removing the threat of linguistic hegemony encroaching upon the choice of each peoples.

Tolkien's ideal state-system, as manifest in his use of language as a means of political exchange and symbolic and effective power, involves the free interaction of ideas and cultures, without repressing or subsuming any people's nationality in a larger homogeneous state. The use of language permits free play of ideas and vocabularies between states and within them, as language as a force can be limited and admitted or denied by a community, as visible in the greeting of the gate wardens outside Edoras, the capital of the Rohirrim lands: "none should enter [Theoden's] gates, save those who know our tongue and are our friends" (*TT*, III, vi, 497). The Wild Men in the Druadan Forest, who aid in the passage of the Rohirrim to Pelennor Fields and the siege of Gondor, communicate to Theoden and his peoples only through their leader Ghan-Buri-Ghan. None of the other members of the community ever demonstrate any knowledge of Westron, but instead speak "in a strange throaty language" (*RK*, V, v, 816). The nations that exist prior to the War of the Ring remain, as the threat to their space of difference has been quelled. The unification of the peoples leads to the re-establishment of the monarchy in Gondor, a hereditary line which has been long-absent from power; however, the figure who takes up the throne is not of the traditional warrior construction. Aragorn's establishment at the end of the War of the Ring is a rejection of the nationalist ideal of a strong or dominant state power, as Gondor's presence in other communities is guidance and protection, rather than dominance or interference. In the Fourth Age, according to the notes and stories constructed in Tolkien's unfinished works and

appendixes, peace and international cooperation is the norm, rather than the antagonistic warfare and balance between violent hegemony and defensive heterogeneity that pervaded the first three Ages of Arda. In *The History of Middle-earth*, there is reference to the culture of international cooperation that results from Aragorn's rule:

> The reign of King Aragorn was long and glorious. In his time Minas Tirith was rebuilt and made stronger and fairer than before; for the king had the assistance of the stone-wrights of Erebor. [the realm of Dwarves established by Thror at the Lonely Mountain] [...] Legolas Thranduil's son had also been one of the king's companions and he brought Elves out of Greenwood (to which name Mirkwood now returned) and they dwelt in Ithilien, and it became the fairest region in all the Westlands. (*Peoples* 243-4)

Tolkien's established leadership at the end of *The Lord of the Rings* is not a dominant, forceful leader or one who upholds the nationalistic post-war ideal of demanding reparations, as the Triple Entente did at the end of World War I. Instead, Aragorn is a leader who respects the needs and drives of each of the communities he interacts with, including those who he has just defeated in war: "the King pardoned the Easterlings that had given themselves up, and sent them away free, and he made peace with the peoples of Harad; and the slaves of Mordor he released and gave to them all the lands about Lake Nurnen to be their own" (*RK*, VI, v, 947). The recognition of individuality and the offer of peaceful interactive heterogeneity extend even to those formerly repressed and dominated by the forces of Mordor and the Black Speech.

While each language in Middle-earth is associated with a peoples or social construction, Black Speech is "of Mordor," of a physical territory, not of a population within its borders (*FR*, I, ii, 49). The language of Mordor is the Black Speech, a language that takes words and concepts from other languages, and corrupts them to fit into the linguistic terms which Sauron devises to homogenize his minions (*RK* Appendix F, 1105). Regardless of which tower they serve, the goblins, orcs, wargs and other forces of darkness all use Black Speech, a single, homogenized tongue without space for individuality. The first orcs are described as having "no language of their own" (*RK* Appendix F, 1105), and Sauron developed the Black speech. When Sauron fell at the end of the Second Age in the battle on the field of Gorgoroth, the orcs, trolls, wargs and other had no common speech and used a corrupted form of Westron to communicate until Sauron returned to power during the Third Age. At this time, "[Black Speech] became once more the language of Barad-dur and the captains of Mordor" (*RK* Appendix F, 1105). The threat which Sauron and Mordor present is not just a militaristic one, but a denial of freedom, individuality, history, culture and language. At the council of Elrond, Gandalf points to this fear when he speaks aloud the words inscribed on the Ring of Power and the very use of the words change the atmosphere in the council:

> A shadow seemed to pass over the high sun, and the porch for a moment grew dark. All trembled, and the Elves stopped their ears. 'Never before has any voice dared to utter words of that tongue in Imladris, Gandalf the Grey,' said Elrond, as the shadow passed and the company breathed once more. 'And let us hope that none will ever speak it here again.' Answered Gandalf. 'Nonetheless I do not ask

your pardon, Master Elrond. For if that tongue is not soon to be heard

in every corner of the West, then let all put doubt aside that this thing

is indeed what the Wise have declared.'(*FR*, II, ii, 248)

The Ring itself, while a fearful physical symbol, lacks the same force of terror as the

pervasive language, the Black Speech, which threatens to subsume the languages of the

Free Peoples.

The cooperation and unification of a number of states to counter the

homogenizing dominance attempted by a single force presents strong material for

historicist critics, who point to the allegorical parallels between the two world wars and

Tolkien's War of the Ring. Garth's insistence on mining past records of the battles in

which Tolkien would have taken part is to develop his argument that "the Great War

played an essential role in shaping Middle-earth" (xv). Looking at Tolkien's own

experience, or contemporary geographic and episodic similarities between Tolkien's

writing and the World Wars has lead to restricted readings of the War of the Ring as

allegorical, a reduction which Tolkien abhorred:

> I dislike Allegory – the conscious and intentional allegory – yet any
>
> attempt to explain the purport of myth or fairytale must use allegorical
>
> language. (And, of course, the more 'life' a story has the more readily
>
> will it be susceptible of allegorical interpretations: while the better a
>
> deliberate allegory is made the more nearly will it be acceptable just as
>
> a story.) (*Letters* 145)

Although critics acknowledge the author's protestation, there are still those who are

insistent upon such a reading, as Edmund Fuller is, though often critics read the presence

of allegory subjectively, looking for allegorical elements, rather than reducing the whole

of the text to a simplified means of interpreting history:

> It has for me an allegorical relation to the struggle of Western
>
> Christendom against the forces embodied, successively but
>
> overlapingly, in Nazism and Communism. The work was conceived
>
> and carried forward when the darkest shadow of modern history was
>
> cast over the West and, for a crucial part of time, over England in
>
> particular. (Fuller 26)

What is interesting to note in the allegorical and historical readings of the text is that

critics fall into the totalizing language which Tolkien avoided and countered. When

historians and critics speak of war, there is not only the simplifying terms "good" and

"evil" which come into play, but in more specific discussions there is ideological

reduction, as the German, Italian and Japanese peoples are all categorized under the

ideological standpoint of their leadership, while all those who stood against them are the

West or Western Christendom. There is a loss of individuality, as a historical blending of

'us' and 'them' takes place. These broad strokes face a challenge in the diversity of

voices in Tolkien's texts and renounced in his correspondence as too narrow for his

complex creation, Middle-earth.

The interaction and cooperation of multiple communities to defeat the singular

power of Sauron does not require a relinquishing of individual culture, language or

history in the sense of a homogenous subsumption, but rather allows each culture to

maintain that which makes them unique. The cooperation between communities is not

integration, but interaction, alliance rather than assimilation. Through the crossing of

individual characters over cultural lines and the developing of marginal associations, as the international group of the Fellowship of the Ring does, there is a play of cultures as a counter to the monolithic force of Sauron, as the forces of Men, Elves, Pukel-Men, Ents and Hobbits all work together in the War of the Ring. The establishment of a king in Gondor at the end of the War of the Ring is a return to empire in Middle-earth, but the imposition of culture and the social structure is not present. Not only do communities remain who have wholly closed linguistic systems, such as the Dwarves and Pukel-men, but peoples far older than the communities of the Edain such as the Elves and Ents maintain their history through oral means, using and sustaining their language as a way of preserving the past. The songs and poetry which appears not only in the narrative texts of Tolkien's creation, but also in the supporting works *The Book of Lost Tales* and *Unfinished Tales* consist of the poetic oral histories of the Eldar and Edain. This traditional oral culture is also passed to the nations the Gondorian state has influenced. The foreword to *The Lord of the Rings* includes the "Note on the Shire Records," which describes the development of the libraries and collection of histories:

> At the end of the Third Age the part played by the Hobbits in the great
> events that led to the inclusion of the Shire in the Reunited Kingdom
> awakened among them a more widespread interest in their own
> history; and many of their traditions, up to that time still mainly oral,
> were collected and written down. (*FR*, Prologue, 13)

Although the history is accessible to external communities, the libraries and collection of manuscripts are within the Shire. Tolkien keeps the authority for the people's history within the community. The established rule at the end of the epic is a rule of order, not of

empire. As Gandalf comforts Butterbur, the innkeeper in Bree after Aragorn's coronation, "'Then the Greenway will be opened again, and his messengers will come north, and there will be comings and goings, and the evil things will be driven out of the waste-lands" (*RK*, VI, vii, 971). The image of a singular power, symbolically presented throughout the story as the One Ring, is denied by the ruler at the end of the text:

> 'Strange indeed,' said Legolas. 'In that hour I looked on Aragorn and thought how great and terrible a Lord he might have become in his strength of his will, had he taken the Ring to himself. Not for naught does Mordor fear him. But nobler is his spirit than the understanding of Sauron' (*RK*, V, ix, 858)

An alternative hegemonic power has not been put in place in Gondor, but rather a leader who is versed in multiple tongues and is known to his people. There is no alternate monolith constructed at the end of the Third Age, but rather a peaceful multiplicity.

The space of difference, the natural sense of play at the margins of communities in their interactions and the refusal of a single centre throughout the linguistic constructions of Middle-earth, creates an ideal international structure. By the time the narrative reaches the Third Age, war in Middle-earth is a defensive mechanism for the preservation of individuality and freedom. The Free Peoples of Middle-earth contribute to the war effort what they are willing, as no community or individual is pressed to fight. Tolkien saw the limits of pacifist objection to warfare, recognizing the need to defend difference and freedom in the face of an oppressive and reductive threat. While he recognized the need to fight, the outcome of even a necessary war is negative: "I do not mean that it may not all, in the present situation, mainly (but not solely) created by

Germany, be necessary and inevitable [to fight]. [...] The destruction of Germany, be it 100 times merited, is one of the most appalling world-catastrophes" (*Letters* 111). The freedom to choose one's involvement in the fight in Tolkien's Middle-earth is an ideal, as the play of language and the denial of authority prevents the invoking of a 'draft.' It is the free play of vocabularies that opens the definition of honour and valour in a text that draws heavily on the medievalist traditions. The play between languages takes away an authoritative 'translation' of action and involvement in the War of the Ring. Non-violent aid is just as instrumental to victory as the participation of soldiers upon the battlefield. As Tolkien's narrative concludes with the end of the war, a multilingual, multinational figure takes up a position of power and guarantees in his leadership the continued space for play and interaction in the Middle-earth.

**Chapter 4**: Conclusion

The two forces dominant in Middle-earth use language as a means of defining space and extending influence, but the fluid form of language as a mechanism of exchange opens the potential for peace, the acceptance of the supplement and the space for a non-totalizing authority in power relationships. Both Gondor and Mordor act as dominant forces among the individual communities of Middle-earth and the political force of each structure is exemplified by their use of and approach to language. There is a bias created for the reader through the comparison of the free play between the communities of the Free Peoples under the protection of Gondor with the closed, self-perpetuating system of Mordor. Tolkien portrays the multilingual free states under the non-invasive guidance and protection of a nation-state as a positive space of exchange and interaction, in contrast to the dark, negative terms granted to the totalitarian force of Mordor. Tolkien's construction of Mordor as a closed, authoritarian structure with no space for change or critique does not allow for the free play of ideas or differance. The War of the Ring ends with the recognition of a leader in a traditional state that resembles a medieval monarchy, but Aragorn himself does not perpetuate those values. Tolkien's establishment of Aragorn as a principal influence in the political activity of Middle-earth gives power to an international figure who embodies multilingualism and multiculturalism even after his ascension to the throne. Aragorn is a character beyond social boundaries or linguistic limitations, yet he is recognized as the leader of the traditional monarchical Gondorian state at the end of the War of the Ring. The power of influence is not given to nationalist, authoritarian or pedagogical figures, but instead to

supplementary, marginal characters who challenge the perpetuation of imperial structures through the recognition and encouragement of differance.

The use of Derridian linguistic theory to approach Tolkien's texts is a means of opening and understanding a philologically rich mythology that challenged nationalist and traditional warrior ethics. A disillusionment with the nationalism that motivated the First and Second World Wars was commonly manifest in British writing, yet Tolkien's use of medieval elements and language as a primary mechanism of power and cultural delineation changes the terms of warfare and provides a unique form of critique. John Garth, in his postscript to his analysis of Tolkien's response to the World Wars, compares Tolkien's creativity and exploration of the fantastic to the malaise evident in other contemporaneous writers:

> In the modernist experimentation that took off in the post-war years –
> largely a reflection of the shock, moral chaos, and bewildering scale of
> the war – [Tolkien] played no part [...] Nor did he participate in the
> kind of literature now seen as the epitome of the trenches. Out of the
> diversity of writing produced by soldiers, what is remembered is an
> amalgam of bitter protest and gritty close-ups, uncompromisingly
> direct in its depiction of trench life and death. (288)

Although Tolkien certainly demonstrates the clear awareness of death, he does not write with a focus upon the battle or the experience of the trenches. Tolkien created his world and its peoples around language, so exploring the presence of differance, space and the supplement within the text points to the powerful interplay that exists in Middle-earth. From the song of Iluvatar to the invocations of Elbereth to the establishment of political

influence through language, Tolkien deflates the authority of physical force and warfare in his construction of language as the primary force of Middle-earth. Interaction, alliance, dominance and conquest can take place without the spilling of blood or the loss of life, as language and cultural interplay take the place of battle and colonization in the relationships between communities in Middle-earth. Interaction, alliance, conflict, dominance and conquest can all take place linguistically in Tolkien's construction, alleviating the need for war and bloodshed.

The leadership and authority exerted by Gondor at the end of the Third Age, beyond its presence as a central force of opposition during the War of the Ring, is not an oppressive or altering force, but is a non-invasive presence and influence. The construction of the idea of kingship and hereditary right is medievalist, as is the belief in the spiritual power of the king, as the linking between political and spiritual authority was still commonplace. The sense of otherworldly power or special skills naturally occurring in the valid leader of the Gondorians is declared when Aragorn enters Minas Tirith: "Thus spake Ioreth, wise-woman of Gondor: *The hands of the king are the hands of a healer*" (*RK*, V, viii, 844 – italics in original). The practical result of Aragorn's return to the seat of power in Gondor does not result in the reification of a medieval social structure. Aragorn, as a leader, is open to interaction and alliance with numerous external communities, as evidenced by the many diplomatic meetings he holds immediately after his acceptance of the throne. Aragorn meets with ambassadors from "East and the South, and from the borders of Mirkwood, and from Dunland in the West" (*RK*, V, v, 947). Tolkien's construction of a medievalist monarchy, a nation of proud warriors with noble bloodlines, does not find its rejuvenation in just a great leader, strategist, or even healer.

Although all these aspects are present in the construction of Aragorn's history and character, these are not the key elements constantly reaffirmed within the text. Tolkien, with his focus upon the power of language, returns the Gondorian state to its former glory by putting a multilingual figure at its head. Aragorn's understanding of Westron, Elvish and Rohirrim provides him access not only to the current communities, but also given him an understanding of their individual cultural constructions and history through his internalization of their vocabulary.

The presence of a monolith, the Black Speech, as both a symbolic and effective force, provides motivation for interaction and unification in Middle-earth. While Tolkien openly abhors war and armed conflict in his letters and glosses battle and bloodshed in his narratives, he provides justification for the peoples of Middle-earth to take up arms. Mordor, as a physical and linguistic threat to the freedom of the varied communities of Middle-earth, is aggressive and unreasoned enough to necessitate a militant response from the free nations. The first point of communication within the text between Mordor and the alliance of the Free Peoples is the meeting at the Black Gate. The messenger is a physical being, who rides out from the gates to speak with the Captains of the challenging army:

> The Lieutenant of the Tower of Barad-dur he was, and his name is remembered in no tale; for he himself had forgotten it, and he said: 'I am the Mouth of Sauron.' But it is told that he was a renegade who came of the race of those that are named the Black Númenóreans; for they established their dwellings in Middle-earth during the years of

Sauron's domination, and they worshipped him, being enamoured of

evil knowledge. (*RK*, V, x, 870)

The "Mouth of Sauron" is the only envoy or messenger Mordor has used, as the previous

representatives of the Black Gate have been Nazgul and Orcs, neither of whom are able

to communicate with any of the Free Peoples. Tolkien's use of a messenger capable of

speech and discussion at the end of the War draws awareness to Mordor's lack of

diplomatic interaction throughout the rest of the text. Only when the threat of physical

violence is apparent does Sauron address his enemies, and even then, it is to offer

ultimatums and taunts, not to explore a diplomatic avenue:

> 'These are the terms,' said the Messenger, [...] 'The rabble of
>
> Gondor and its deluded allies shall withdraw at once beyond the
>
> Anduin, first taking oaths never again to assail Sauron the Great in
>
> arms, open or secret. All lands east of the Anduin shall be Sauron's
>
> for ever, solely. West of the Anduin as far as the Misty Mountains and
>
> the Gap of Rohan shall be tributary to Mordor, and men there shall
>
> bear no weapons, but shall have leave to govern their own affairs. But
>
> they shall help to rebuild Isengard which they have wantonly
>
> destroyed, and that shall be Sauron's, and there his lieutenant shall
>
> dwell: not Saruman, but one more worthy of trust.' Looking in the
>
> Messenger's eyes they read his thought. He was to be that lieutenant,
>
> and gather all that remained of the West under his sway; he would be
>
> their tyrant and they his slaves. (*RK*, V, x, 872)

There is no attempt at negotiations, no debates of treaties or agreements, but rather an attempted forceful conquest of Middle-earth. This force and threat of dominance is countered with heterogenic cooperation and alliance.

Open war is not the chosen path of the Council of Elrond, but Aragorn, Gandalf and the communities of Rohan and Gondor grudgingly accept it as necessary. When stating his plan to challenge Mordor in a show of force at the Black Gates, Aragorn does not use the past alliance of the commanders to validate his plan, nor does he cite his return to the land of Gondor as a rightful justification of authority: "Nonetheless I do not yet claim to command any man. Let others choose as they will" (*RK*, V, ix, 862). Part of the acceptance of the eventuality of warfare, however, is the acceptance of neighbouring communities and the reaffirmation of old alliances. Upon arriving in Minas Tirith, the capital city of Gondor, Pippin notices the beacons lit, which Gandalf explains as the Gondorians "calling for aid. War is kindled. See, there is the fire on Amon Din, and the flame on Eilenach; and there they go speeding west: Nardol, Erelas, Min-Rimmon, Calenhad, and the Halifirien on the borders of Rohan" (*RK*, V, I, 731). A mechanism is in place to span the distance between Minas Tirith and Rohan so that light may travel quickly over the various mountains between the two communities when reinforcements are needed. The One Ring of Sauron was taken by Isildur during the "Last Alliance of the Free Peoples," as Tolkien includes in his Histories an earlier alliance between different communities the last time Sauron was at his full power and threatened dominance over Middle-earth. Elrond, at the advisory Council that establishes the Fellowship of the Ring, describes his memories of the creation of the rings and the resulting rise of Sauron to power:

For in that time he was not yet evil to behold, and [the Elven-smiths of

Eregion] received his aid and grew mighty in craft, whereas he learned

all their secrets, and betrayed them, and forged secretly in the

Mountain of Fire the One Ring to be their master. [...] Then Elendil

the Tall and his mighty sons, Isildur and Anarion, became great  lords;

and the North-realm they made in Arnor, and the South-realm in

Gondor above the mouths of Anduin.  But Sauron of Mordor assailed

them, and they made the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, and the hosts

of Gil-galad and Elendil were mustered in Arnor.  (*FR*, II, ii, 236)

The peoples of Middle-earth have a tradition of interaction and alliance, but throughout

the history of these associations there has not been the subsumption of any group under

the control or cultural dominance of another.  The continued presence of multiple

communities after a long history of interaction and partnership demonstrates the stability

of the linguistic groups, as while there has been intermingling to a degree, no one

community has absorbed the language and culture of another.  The embrace of difference

has been necessary throughout the history of Middle-earth, and the War of the Ring is no

exception.

The construction of space in contrast to the monolithic force of the Black Speech

of Mordor is a creation of an idealized international system on Tolkien's part, in which

pacifist ideals of interaction and communication are an effective alternative to warfare.

The destruction of the homogenizing linguistic force is followed by the rise of another

dominant power, but one that does not actively seek to influence or change the

surrounding communities.  The establishment of Gondor as an essential political presence

in Middle-earth in the Fourth Age is not restrictive to the communities under the nation's protective umbrella. Gondor's enforcement of peace early in Aragorn's reign opens diplomatic channels in which communities have a means of communication with the dominant nation. Throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn demonstrates a knowledge of three languages, including not only their vocabulary and grammar, but also the oral history and poetry. An understanding of the cultural products of a community is a means of accessing the intimate history of the peoples. Aragorn gains this level of understanding of the Númenórean history, the Gondorian peoples, the Elves and the Rohirrim. The leadership of such a cosmopolitan figure leads to the opening of a space of communication between the culturally and linguistically varied free nations. The diplomatic activities at the end of the War of the Ring establish balance, as Aragorn's rise to power in the new dominant state does not result in homogenization or oppression, but the acceptance of different communities, histories and languages.

The use of the medieval epic structure to construct a war-narrative which challenges the ideals of warfare, violence and the warrior code is a challenge by Tolkien to the cynical and pedagogical writings of the war and inter-war eras, as he constructs a world in which war is ended through the recognition of difference and the acceptance of the hyper-national supplement. Language is the primary force of definition and demarcation in Middle-earth, a counter to the reliance on force and physical strength in medieval warrior societies or the trust in mechanized warfare found in modern international conflict. The construction of a world in which dialogue and diplomacy is paramount, where the dominant nation is lead by a multilingual figure and where war is ended through the destruction of weaponry rather than a defeat by force is Tolkien's

idealized response to the vocabulary of force he was surrounded by in both his scholarly pursuits and patriotic obligations. Tolkien worked on the mythology and narratives of Middle-earth during the time prior to, during and after seeing the battlefields of World War I, and throughout these times the constant foundation of his work was language. Arda is constructed through language, and the peoples which Tolkien created to inhabit his universe are shaped by their languages and through language shape the events and ideas of Middle-earth. There is no set vocabulary, no absolute terms or definitive ideas; rather, there is a space of play between the many peoples and their cultural concepts. Tolkien's Middle-earth is a subjective space of interaction, in which language enables interaction and intercommunication without interference. The power of the word as a concept, construction and force within Middle-earth opens the space of critique and pacifist ideology in Tolkien's modern medievalist text.

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