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Abstract

"An analysis of how Tolkien uses language from the critical stance of chaos theory."

Additional Keywords

Chaos theory; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Use of language; Tolkien, J.R.R. The Lord of the Rings

The Restoration of Language in Middle-earth

Louise G. Keene



n analysis of how Tolkien uses language from the critical stance of chaos theory will amplify the understanding of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien is a master of numerous Romance languages, as well as Old English, Finnish, Icelandic, German, and many others. For Tolkien, the invention of languages is the foundation and key to his system of cosmic order and disorder. After Tolkien invented languages, more than fourteen, he had to provide a world in which the languages could be used. Establishing a world from a void is possible because the invented languages give existence to this world. Creation of languages sets in motion a process from which a cosmos results. Accordingly, he creates a world and a story — *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien loves words; words please him, and he sees beauty in language's appearance and sound. Tolkien's imagination is expressed in the richness of language; Tolkien is a wordsmith.

Tolkien's use of created words and languages gives unity to the chaotic world that he observed. Words can give the user power over the natural world. Disturbed by the upheaval of his time, Tolkien used his art to establish an order that he thought was missing. He felt threatened by events that were beyond his control, and he felt the disruption of his expected way of life; Tolkien saw the decay and fragmentation of his community. Tolkien is able to impose certainty, in an uncertain time, through the use of his invented language. Language is an instrument that gives order and stability; moreover, words allow an idea to become a reality — and for Tolkien an object of order. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien characteristically used language as the instrument of his joyful revelations. Tolkien's constructed languages were influenced by his love of Old and Middle English, and that influence is evident in Tolkien's cosmos of words and languages. He adapted many obsolete, archaic, and foreign words for *The Lord of the Rings*; additionally, he coined some words and borrowed others from old Norse poems. While writing, Tolkien would fabricate a name or word; then, considering those with merit, he would subject them to a rigorous philological investigation in an attempt to discover if they were appropriate for his story. Tolkien's invented languages are complete with songs, poetry, incantations, and evocations common features of Middle English. Tolkien's work in words and languages gives a singular dimension of reality resulting in an ordered universe.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's use of words possesses magic and conveys power. The Middle-earth lan-

guages possess a vital force because the right user can utter the right word and release consequential powers for good or evil (Noel 57). Tolkien's words can exert power over people by playing on their fears, especially concerning that which is foreign. On the other hand, words can promote unity between various characters and cultures in the trilogy; language serves as a bond among diverse groups. Tolkien's words and various languages tell part of the story by indicating and reflecting characters and their cultures.

An analysis from a chaos theory perspective reveals an underlying structure of order with observable patterns in the trilogy's chaotic world. Through focusing on and magnifying the chaotic events in Tolkien's story, one finds consistent patterns, stability, and regularities. Beneath the fluctuations, a balance exists. In instability, stability exists. Tolkien begins the trilogy in *The Fellowship of the Ring* using restorative language to establish order and harmony. The trilogy proceeds into chaos in *The Two Towers* where language changes, controls, and dominates; language has power and can lead to despair. As the story continues in *The Return of the King*, chaos still reigns; nevertheless, the search for stability, which is achieved through language and words, results in joyful revelation and restoration of order.

Responding to a *New York Times Book Review* in 1955, Tolkien defended his created fairy stories, that was what he preferred to call his work, against being called a "hobby" saying that the invention of languages was not a relief-outlet, but the invention was his work and served as a foundation for the stories he created. Tolkien further replied that the stories were made to provide a world for the languages rather than the reverse. He stated that a name came first and the story followed. Later, Tolkien added that he would have preferred to write in "Elvish" (Carpenter, *Letters* 219). As T. A. Shippey maintains in *The Road to Middle-earth*, good writing begins with good words, and Tolkien, as a philologist, deliberately searched for factual concepts or linguistic authenticity that lay behind the words of his fantasy works (44). Fantasy should be buttressed on reality; Tolkien creates reality in the trilogy though his language in Middle-earth. His universe, created by language, contains a cosmos.

Tolkien's mother taught Tolkien, when he was a child, to love languages; his mother had given him his first Latin lessons. Tolkien was fascinated by the look and sound of words. Reaching adolescence, he discovered his love for words, and as a result of this love, he was drawn to create an entire language (Carpenter, *Biography* 35-36). Later in his life, Tolkien would say that he did not invent or create

these words and stories, rather than he discovered them. Still, Tolkien would have been aware that the word invention comes from Latin *invenire* 'to find' or 'discover' (Shippey 19).

When Tolkien became a student at Oxford, he began his studies in classics. But he did not achieve as high a score in classics as he did in his special love, comparative philology; his paper in philology was practically faultless. As a result, Tolkien changed schools and began to specialize in linguistics studies. While reading a group of Old English poems, he was intrigued by two lines: *Eala Earendel engla beorhtast* / Hail Earendel, brightest of angels / *ofer middangeard monnum sended*. / above the middle-earth sent unto men (Carpenter, *Biography* 62-64). Tolkien felt the beauty of words and was enthralled. In his studies at Oxford, Tolkien read some selections of William Morris, who had also studied at Oxford, and discovered that he and Morris had similar views on literature. Both looked to the past, especially the medieval period, for inspiration. Tolkien liked Morris' style and later would emulate Morris' dream-vision style using vagueness of time and place for the story. Furthermore, Tolkien was inspired by Morris' description of an extremely detailed imagined landscape (Carpenter, *Biography* 70). Still a student, Tolkien continued to explore his creation of languages.

Tolkien, like Morris, was dissatisfied and disillusioned with the world. Tolkien, discontented with the wars, the world's material improvements, and the destruction of nature's order, sought to impose order, as expressed in words, in his sub-creation. Thus, Tolkien's creation — his Secondary World — grew out of a time of upheaval. He saw a chaotic time of wars and a modern world in crisis. For Tolkien, fantasy fills a need giving meaning and purpose to the external world (Evans 20-24). Power, as expressed in words, gave Tolkien authority over the chaotic world he felt threatened by. This historical surrounding, a time of fragmentation and disorder, affect Tolkien and influenced his writing.

As Tolkien began to write and to adopt Morris' style of prose and verse romance, the world as Tolkien knew it was changing. The peaceful English countryside was changing because of industrial changes and inventions; and, most importantly, England had declared war on Germany. Tolkien did not enlist for the army right away; he wanted to finish his degree, and he was able to begin training for the army and defer his call-up until after he had taken his degree (Carpenter, *Biography* 72). After achieving First Class Honors at Oxford, Tolkien was commissioned a second lieutenant in the army specializing in signaling that dealt with words, messages, and codes, which were his love (Carpenter 78). Then he was sent to the war front. After a time of witnessing destruction and death and the mutilation of the countryside, Tolkien contracted trench fever and was sent back to England, where he was reunited with his wife, Edith. Tolkien never forgot the animal horror of trench warfare (Carpenter, *Biography* 84-85). Tolkien

had lost all but two of his friends in the war; the psychological cruelty would leave him disillusioned. He felt the passing of good times and wonderful people, which could never be recovered. Likewise, the vast carnage of World War II paralleled Tolkien's own ideas and version of the ultimate struggle between the forces of light and darkness — order and disorder (Rogers 13-21). Tolkien viewed his society and world of decay and fragmentation symptoms of chaos with sorrow. Nevertheless he imposed an order in this chaotic world by bringing order to it with his words. Upon viewing chaos, one finds beneath it certainty and consistency — order (Hayles 237-39).

After the war, Tolkien, with his family, moved to the University of Leeds where Tolkien accepted a post. Tolkien was back in the academic atmosphere in which he thrived, and he was working on his invented world, which he later called his "sub-creation." At the age of thirty-two, he became a professor at Leeds. Later, Tolkien returned to Oxford where he served as a professor specializing in West Midland dialect of Middle English. It is here in the English countryside, Tolkien began to see the railways despoiling the peaceful, green countryside that he loved so much. The destruction of the landscape greatly angered him; masses of new red brick destroyed the country avenues, and new roads, needed for automobiles, cut through green fields. For Tolkien, the countryside had undergone a violent and hideous change (Carpenter, *Biography* 111-25). The wars and the destruction greatly disturbed him; as a result, Tolkien withdrew into his sub-creation. And as Frodo tells Gandalf, "I wish it need not have happened in my time." Tolkien felt the same (*Fellowship* 82).

Living during World War I and II, a time of uncertainty and a time of meaningless existence when the supposed security covered an underlying nothingness, Tolkien reacted and thus created with words a cosmos from that voided the world of *The Lord of the Rings*. He resolved the chaotic world around him using his art to order the affairs that attracted or bothered him (Rogers 60). Tolkien is able to reassert or impose order because he is able to find the appropriate words. Words, set down in an appropriate method, disclose what lies beyond — Humanity and Order (Ready 9). Therefore, language is a tool for ordering the chaos of human experience. Not only does Tolkien invent a world of different races of people, but he also gives them words and languages; as a result, he creates reality from a void or nothingness.

Katherine Hayles in *Chaos Bound* investigates language's ability to create reality and reality's capability to restrict and control language (3). Hayles asserts that any idea can be used if it can be put into words. She asks how one materializes a dragon, and in answer she says, "By amplifying its probability." Creation can take place because the appropriate words can be invented (122). In this manner, Tolkien creates or invents, or as he preferred to say discovers, his world from a seemingly empty void. The words give him power over his cosmos and makes his

cosmos a reality. In a conversation with his fellow Inking, C. S. Lewis, Tolkien replied to Lewis's assertion that myths are lies. Tolkien adamantly answered, "No, they are not." Tolkien said:

You call a tree a tree, and you think nothing more of the word. But it was not a "tree" until someone gave it that name. You call a star a star, and say it is a ball of matter moving on a mathematical course. But that how you see it. By so naming things and describing them you are only inventing your own terms about them. And just as speech is invention about objects and ideas, so myth is invention about truth. Carpenter, *Biography* 147)

Anthony Ugolnik asserts, "The name of a thing defines its nature." Consequently, language or words structure reality and possess power. Ugolnik cites an example concerning Aragorn. In Rivendell, Aragorn is often called the Dúnadan, which in Elvish is *dúin-adan*: Man of the West, Númenorean. Accordingly, Aragorn's name defines who he is (19-20). An illustration of Tolkien's belief in the power of the word occurs when Pippin sees Frodo's recovery after his wound from the Ringwraiths, Pippin proclaims, "Make way for Frodo, the Lord of the Ring." Pippin is immediately chastised when Gandalf says, "Evil things do not come into this valley [Rivendell]; but all the same we should not name them" (*Fellowship* 298). By naming a thing, it is given power and can become a reality.

Applying chaos theory to Tolkien's trilogy enables one to see order and patterns in a supposed chaotic world. Threads of chaos theory weave through the fabric of the story allowing one to see patterns in the interwoven plots. Certainty and uncertainty coexist. Instability becomes stable. The panoramic view of the surface layer of *The Lord of the Rings* discloses a universe in turmoil and flux; chaos appears to reign. Tolkien creates a detailed world where unpredictability seems to be a way of life, yet beneath the erratic aberrations, deep structures of order are perceptible. In his lecture "On Fairy-Stories," Tolkien names this renewal or regaining Recovery (57). These complex interconnections — disorderly order — are chaos theory (Hayles xiii-xiv). According to Hayles, with the advent of analysis and application of chaos theory, books became texts transformed from ordered sets of words to permeable membranes through which flowed the currents of history, language, and culture. Texts are not predictable and stable; on the contrary, texts reveal, upon examination, a source of chaos. Hayles explains that chaos, which once meant simply disorder, is now viewed as disordered in the sense that it is unpredictable, but chaos is ordered in the sense that it possesses patterns and regularities (51). Hayles states that chaos should not be seen as an absence or a void but as a positive force in its own right (2-3). Paradoxically, chaos unites with order, and absence unites with presence. Chaos displaces order as the texture of reality, but chaos becomes a law, which indicates that chaos is a kind of order (Hayles 77).

Hayles contends that language has power to create reality, and reality has power to compel and direct language. Tolkien creates his own reality where hobbits, elves, wizards, and dwarfs can exist, and through his words, he expresses it so that it is acceptable for his reader. Fantasy should be constructed on reality (Parker 598-99). Through his words, Tolkien does create reality. The language that Tolkien uses to reveal his discovery is paramount to believing in his story. Paul Ricoeur paraphrases Max Black from Black's book *Models and Metaphors* by saying that to describe a domain of reality in terms of an imaginary theoretical model is a way of seeing things differently by changing our language about the subject of our investigation. Furthermore, this change proceeds from the created fiction through the characteristics of the discovered fiction to reality itself (67).

In Chapter Five of *Chaos Bound*, Katherine Hayles discusses Stanislaw Lem and his created texts. Quoting Lem, Hayles writes that chance and order guided Lem's pen. So too for Tolkien. Lem and Tolkien discovered texts as a way to create a space that might be opened to uncertainty, but within which they would have the power of authority; both are able to reassert order by their writing (Hayles 118-19). And for both, creation through language is a random act transformed into ordered text. Additionally, textual order can have chance events; Tolkien did not always know where his creation of text would take him. As the story unfolded, it established roots in the past and unexpected branches sprouted. Thus Tolkien wrote in the foreword to *The Fellowship of the Ring* (x). Lem acknowledges the void and assumes the existence of a "somethingness" — in like manner, so does Tolkien. While a concept may lack a reality principle, any idea can be applied if it can be put into words. Since Tolkien was able to invent or discover the appropriate words, he was able to establish a world from a void. As Tolkien used language to fill the void, the void gave way to order (Hayles 120-22).

The omnipresent physical and spiritual threats to security in Tolkien's milieu, in other words threats to order, catalyzed and shaped his work. Searching for moral and emotional truth, Tolkien's imagination rejected the despair of his world and turned to the past for the values he thought were lacking in his world. *The Lord of the Rings* is a search for truth and an attempt to defeat chaos through individual and group effort. Behind Tolkien's interest in words lays the feeling that the outer known world hides an inner world that is not chaotic or meaningless but is ordered and meaningful. Words interlace in the fabric covering reality; on the other hand, words personify reality (Evans 34, 44). As a scholar of medieval languages, Tolkien looked to past times and ordered those languages into new patterns. As a result, the languages become a force with enormous potential to create beauty or ugliness, good or evil; words have power (Kiely 95). C. S. Lewis said of Tolkien, a fellow Inking, that, "he had been not merely a student of languages but a linguistic inventor. . . . He had

been inside language" (Carpenter, *Biography* 133-34).

Serving as the foundation and key to his system of cosmic order and disorder, Tolkien's linguistic artistry was fundamental to his creation of a Secondary World. In a letter to his publishers, Tolkien wrote that the invention of languages was the foundation for his stories. Maintaining that the stories were made rather than provided a world for the languages than the reverse, he added, "I should have preferred to write in 'Elvish'" (Kirk 6). *The Lord of the Rings* became the story serving as a frame for his languages. Striving for a world view, Tolkien's use of language not only describes an individual experience, but his language also creates a distinct and separate universe (Ugolini 21-22).

Tolkien's subcreation contains a cosmos complete with peoples and languages. Knowing the power of the word, Tolkien looks to an era where he could use, borrow, and coin words that would suit his requirements. As a lover and scholar of the Old and Middle Ages, Tolkien looked to past ages to find what he desired to give his words and languages reality. Thus he adapted many medieval words to use in his subcreation. Tolkien's love of the medieval era reveals itself in his use of languages, names, and words that originated from Old English, Germanic, Celtic, Finnish, and Old Norse. For example, Middle-earth is a Germanic expression for the world of man (Rogers 44). That a dwarf never reveals his inner name is directly derived from Old Norse sources. Additionally, Celeborn's name, the Elven Lord of Lsrien, is derived from the Celtic word *caled*, 'hard' plus *bon*, 'stump,' or *bon*, 'breast' (Epstein 517-21). Gandalf's name is derived from an Old Norse word *Gandalf* 'sorcerer elf,' and he was known as *Olórin* in his youth, which is from Old High German *Alarûn* (Noel 32-33). Lin Carter traced the word *orc* to Old English roots as well as the word *Grima Wormtongue*, *grimena* (caterpillar) and *smials*, the long, narrow tunnel houses of hobbits, that came from Old English *smael* (180-82).

Looking back to the Old and Middle Ages, Tolkien immersed himself in that time when language changes were observable. He was excited by Welsh, Greek, Germanic, and Gothic words; he was keenly aware of the sound and appearance of words. His study of Finnish led to his creation of "Quenya" or High-elven language. Later, he developed his second elvish language, "Sindarin," which was modeled on the phonology of Welsh. Tolkien's specialization was the West Midland dialect of Middle English, in part, because it was the county of his mother's family, and having spent part of his childhood in a West Midland hamlet, Tolkien felt a strong emotional pull to this area. His mother, who taught him his first languages, instilled in Tolkien the love of languages (Carpenter, *Biography* 93-94, 131-32). For historical and aesthetic reasons, Tolkien had specific reasons for using the words he chose. He had researched for the *Oxford English Dictionary*, so he was quite familiar with the etymology of many words. Tolkien preferred the archaic vocabulary and syntax.

Tolkien would be irritated when a proof-reader questioned his intent or spelling. Nevertheless, Tolkien did admit to use of bad grammar when he spelled *dwarfs* as *dwarves*. Later though, he would say that *dwarves* went well with *elves* (Hyde 21-22). When forming the words and names for his fairy stories, Tolkien would decide on the word's or name's meaning; then, he would develop its form into one of his languages. Often he would construct a word or name and later decide it was meaningless; conversely, other names and words were philologically scrutinized. In Tolkien's imagination, the names and stories are real; he ask himself two questions: how the name or word came into being and what the name or word means. As a result, his works have a sense of reality (Carpenter, *Biography* 92-94). Tolkien did not see himself as an inventor; rather, he saw himself as a discoverer.

And Tolkien discovered and borrowed many words and used them aptly. *Mordor* in Old English, which is *mortor*, means "murder," "torment," and "mortal sin," which suits the evil place of Mordor, and in Elvish Mordor means "Black Country." Ruth S. Noel elucidates what she sees as Tolkien's most ambitious use of Old English—the formation of the hobbit calendar. For example, *Asteryule* is derived from *aeftergeola* or January, and another is the month of June that was *Forelith*, which comes from *lith*, the Old English words for the months of June and July. Moreover, deriving from an Old English word, Frodo's name was drawn from *fród*, which in Old English meant "wise" and "prudent." Additionally, the words and names of the Rohirrim are Old English or archaic English translations, according to Noel. For instance, *athelas*, Aragorn's healing herb, is derived from Old English *athel* meaning noble; furthermore, the plural suffix *las* is formed from an Elvish element of Tolkien's invention. Appropriately, the word *ent* in Old English meant "giant." The orcs are also suitably named; in Old English the word *demon* was obtained from the Latin *Orcus*. (Noel 17-28, 60).

Tolkien also coined names of people and places. For example, *barrow-wights* is a name he invented as is *hobbit*. Other words Tolkien coined were invented for their sound as in *neekerbrekers*, which is an insect name (Lodell 160-75). Some words Tolkien adapted are archaic. Namely, the name Bilbo is antiquated as is the word *Bree*, which formerly meant "bank" or "hill" (Noel 19).

Tolkien begins the trilogy in *The Fellowship of the Ring* using restorative language establishing harmony and order. Characteristically, Tolkien's words and languages convey emotions, clues, messages, and instructions, which are sometimes encoded in songs, poems, and incantations. For instance, as Frodo and his friends begin their quest, they sing songs that are of a cheerful, homely nature, which accords with the peaceful, ordered Shire (Bisenieks 22). And Frodo sings Bilbo's song, "The road goes ever on and on . . ." Accordingly, Tom Bombadil is able to rescue Merry and Pippin from Old Man Willow by singing a song. Tom Bombadil sings:

You let them out again Old Man Willow! What be you a-thinking of? You should not be waking. Eat earth! Dig deep! Drink water! Go to sleep! Bombadil is talking. (*Fellowship* 169)

Tom Bombadil uses a verbal means to restore order, specifically in nature; thus, his power over the natural world reveals itself through language (Chance 39-44). Later after the hobbits leave Tom Bombadil, the company encounters the barrow-wights and are trapped in a barrow. Fortunately, Frodo remembers the rhyme Tom taught him and cries, "Come, Tom Bombadil, for our need is near us" (*Fellowship* 196). Thus summoned, Tom, in rescuing the hobbits, sings, "Get out, you old Wight! Vanish in the sunlight!" Consequently, Tom banishes the darkness and cold restoring truth, light, and order (Chance 41-42).

In the same way, words in Rivendell's songs rejuvenate the spirits of the company of the Ring. Songs are regarded as having a soothing virtue, and those who sing feel their troubles lifted from them (Marchesani 3). When Frodo first listens to the Elf's songs, his senses are overcome by the beauty of the melodies and the interwoven words, and he is held in a spell as the words seemed to take shape imparting harmony to his senses and restoring order to his thoughts. Nevertheless, as he continues to listen, he feels as if a continuous river is flowing over him too multitudinous for its pattern to be comprehended—feelings of disorder. Still, he falls asleep in the peaceful, ordered, and melodious Rivendell (*Fellowship* 307).

In a like manner, words serve as clues and instruction. When Frodo, Gandalf, and the rest of the Fellowship of the Ring arrive at the closed doors of Moria, Gandalf is able to open the doors when he speaks, "Mellon." Knowing how to discover and interpret the Elvish writing on the closed door, which read "Speak friend and enter," Gandalf is able to solve the riddle and gain the company's entrance into Moria. For Gandalf, possessing the knowledge of the language is a source of power (Irwin 573). Conversely, at the end of *Fellowship*, the language of unity and order changes to turmoil and chaos. Using words as weapons, Boromir, one of the fellowship, begins to name-call and to use hostile language in order to gain possession of the Ring (Chance 52).

Nevertheless beneath visible order, disorder can exist. To illustrate, at Elrond's council where tranquillity and peace reign, when Gandalf speaks the words inscribed upon the Ring, which is Sauron's Black Speech, the atmosphere turns evil and becomes dark and menacing. The inscription reads:

Ash nazg durbatulûk,
One Ring to rule them all,
Ash nazg gimbatul,
One Ring to find them,
Ash nazg thrakatulûk,
One Ring to bring them all
Agh burzum-ishi krimpatul!
and in the Darkness bind them. (*Fellowship* 333)

The words evoke horror and chaos striking fear into the hearts of the council (Noel 37).

As the fairy story progresses in *The Two Towers*, Tolkien uses language to change events and control and dominate people. Accordingly, Tolkien, though the use of his words, guides the story into disorder—chaos. The story's setting moves into a land devastated by the struggle between good and evil—order and disorder. In *The Two Towers*, chaos is shown in the division and differences of diverse people where a race people attempt to dominate other races. Sauron, a wizard, for example, breeds orcs, trolls, wargs, and Black Riders to dominate. Sauron's desire for power leads to chaos. Once again, Tolkien uses words in songs, chants, and incantations to convey messages filled with meaning. Namely, Tolkien conveys darkness and division, or in other words disorder and a threat to harmony, in the talk and songs of the ents. Pippin and Merry are able to arouse the wrath of the ents and cause them to take action against Saruman in Isengard; as a result, the ents, as they march to Isengard, sing, "To Isengard with doom we come!" As Treebeard laments the ent's past he says, "songs like trees bear fruit only in their own time and their own way: and sometimes they are withered untimely" (*Towers* 112-14). In this manner, Tolkien's use of words changes events (Chance 53-55).

In *The Two Towers*, Tolkien splits the narrative into two strands. Separations and wanderings fragment the action of the members of the Fellowship of the Ring. Some members come back together only to separate once again while Gandalf weaves in and out of the story, and as Gandalf says, "Even the wise cannot see all ends." Each individual, as part of the pattern, cannot see the entire fabric (Shippey 121-24). Interweaving the plots of Frodo's and Sam's journey to Mount Doom and the rest of the company's battle at Minas Tirith further intensifies the confusion and sense of disorder. Richard C. West contends that the chance collisions of disparate people and events knit the fabric of the fairy story. West supports his analysis by relating the meeting of Pippin and Merry with the ents after the hobbits are captured and then escape from the orcs. West further asserts that the narrative is not loose, except on the surface view; he maintains that everything is interconnected (83-84). Thus Tolkien weaves the fairy story, and to the reader, the surface plot appears as disorderly order.

As the story proceeds in *The Two Towers*, words reveal attempts to dominate resulting in disorder. When Gandalf approaches Théoden, King of Gondor, with the news that the storm comes, in other words evil and darkness, Gandalf is met by the king's evil advisor, Wormtongue, who is appropriately named. Truly serving Saruman and playing on the fears of the king, Wormtongue has used words to exert power over Théoden. Hence, Wormtongue lashes out at Gandalf with words saying, "Lúthspell I name you, Illnews." And Gandalf responds, "A witless worm have you become. Therefore be silent, and keep your forked tongue behind your teeth. I have not passed through fire

and death to bandy crooked words with a serving-man till the lightning falls." Gandalf goes on to say to Théoden, "Not all is dark . . . and words could I speak with you. Too long have you sat in shadows and trusted to twisted tales and crooked promptings" (Towers 149-51). Thus as Gandalf utters the right words releasing powers for good, order hidden beneath disorder comes into view. Tolkien's story imparts the power to subvert and manipulate or to revive and restore (Chance 61-62).

Tolkien's task as a sub-creator is to make the reader believe in the Secondary World; hence, the language and words summon a reality. Robley Evans asserts that if the right words are spoken in the right way, reality would be revealed according to the speaker's wish. After being attacked by Shelob, Sam, in fear and in darkness, cried aloud "in a language which he did not know":

A Elbereth Gilthoniel
o menel palan-díriel,
le nallon sm di'nguruthos!
A tiro nin, Fanuilos! (*Towers* 430)

Sam is able to gain power over Shelob and rescue Frodo because of the power of words. Evans maintains that the saying of words gives man power over Nature because the words define reality (31). In a moment of crisis and chaos, order surfaces.

Chaos is still evident as the fairy story moves forward in *The Return of the King*; nevertheless, order is reasserting itself. As the search for peace and stability continues, uncertainty is giving way to certainty; evil and darkness are giving way to good and light. Truly, Tolkien discloses the power of the word and indicates that language is a reflection of real knowledge, understanding, and goodness (Chance 84). While Pippin swears loyalty to Denethor, who is Gondor's steward or ruler, the relationship between an individual and the community foreshadows the restoration of order. Nonetheless, under the layer of restoration of stability, instability still lurks. Denethor, deep in grief over the death of one of his sons, wishes to hear how his son died while ignoring the conflict surrounding his realm and engages in a verbal debate with Gandalf after Gandalf has chastised him for Denethor's lack of concern for his stewardship (Chance 87-88). Denethor retorts to Gandalf, "the rule of Gondor, my lord, is mine and no other man's, unless the king should come again" (*Return* 33). Once again, Tolkien's use of words foreshadows the restoration of order.

After the great battle on Gondor's fields, many wounded lay in the House of Healing in Minas Tirith. Among those were Merry, Faramir, and Iowyn, who all had been wounded by the Black Shadow. An old woman of the house remembered from old lore and said, "The hands of the king are the hands of the healer, and so shall the rightful king be known." Hence Aragorn was revealed as the rightful king as he came into the city and brought healing. Using herbs and words to command the Black Shadows to depart, Aragorn restored life to the wounded

and dying. Upon receiving the crown of kingship, Aragorn says, "Out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth I am come. In this place will I abide, and my heirs, unto the ending of the world" (*Return* 303). The crowning of Aragorn helps to restore order in Middle-earth.

Tolkien also used words promoting unity and harmony between diverse groups, such as between elves and dwarves. As members of the Fellowship Gimli, a dwarf, and Legolas, an elf, began the quest as foes because their races were adversarial. Still, as they come to know each other during the journey, they find admirable qualities in each other and vow to visit each other's country. Accordingly, Tolkien's language unites different cultures and promotes peace.

As order is restored in other parts of Middle-earth, Frodo and his company, upon returning to the Shire, find destruction and tyranny. They had learned much on their quest. As a result, they are able and capable of restoring order, peace, and harmony to the Shire. Their recovery of the Shire reestablishes order. Ultimately Tolkien, through his craft of writing, is able to achieve joyful revelation and restoration of order. Granted, the restoration is not without a price; certainly, Aragorn ascends as king; nonetheless, the Third Age passes, and much that is beautiful in Middle-earth is gone. Victory is mixed with grief (Crowe 8). Still, as Gandalf says, "Indeed the waste in time will be waste no longer" (*Return* 36).

Certain correlations between good and evil or light and darkness, which represent order and disorder, unify Tolkien's Middle-earth. In Tolkien's imaginative world, the turbulent forces of order and disorder constantly engage in a dynamic process of interaction. He created an intricate universe, through the use of words or language, where chance, luck, or supernatural forces appear to determine the outcome of events. This eternal struggle between good and evil — order and disorder — ends in stability and order for Middle-earth. Tolkien coins the word *eucaastrophe*, as happy ending or good catastrophe, for the resolution to order. Aragorn's planting the white tree in the courtyard at Minas Tirith symbolizes a return to order and happiness for the diverse races of people. On the other hand, Tolkien does not deny the possibility of sorrow and failure and coined the word *dyscaastrophe*, the bad catastrophe, which remained as a threat. Tolkien created a world where, on the surface, chaos abounded. Still in the layers of the story, hidden beneath, chaos gives way to order. William Ready contends, "The great art of Story is to tell the reader what is happening not only on the surface, but below and above and, also what is to come . . ." (97). The result is a mosaic of chaos and order.

According to Robley Evans, Tolkien's fantasy satisfies a need for purpose in our lives and meaning in the external world; Tolkien's imagination is a power for good. Furthermore, Evans contends, "Behind Tolkien's interest in words . . . is his sense that the outer world we know with our senses hides or disguises an 'inner' world which is not

chaotic . . . but is ordered" (20, 34). Reiterating, Evans says that fairy stories reaffirm the triumph of good over evil; therefore, the existence of an ordered universe behind the seeming disorder in the Primary World. He goes on to say that *The Lord of the Rings* is a journey to defeat chaos through individual effort. Evans claims that the One Ring symbolizes the chaotic world beyond order, which constantly strives to break through. Moreover, he suggests that invisibility is a perversion of the natural state of things and is associated with evil and disorder (42-44, 50-51). Thus Tolkien's fantasy sets in order the chaos of human experience.

Tolkien's understanding of the word and the authority that can be conveyed by the word, which creates reality, allows him to take his fairy story though a journey of despair to hope and order, namely Recovery. In his lecture "On Fairy-Stories," Tolkien spoke of a need to look at things anew — Recovery. He stated, "Recovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining — regaining a clearer view" (57). Roger Sale maintains that Recovery is to see objects as if for the first time. Tolkien allows the reader to see anew and to look at the world with fresh eyes. Sale contends, "to see . . . as though for the first time and to write as though just discovering the power of words, to know how things were meant to be seen." Sale goes on to assert that for Tolkien Recovery is a justification for his withdrawal, and Recovery was to be able to see in the study of words a retreat from the ravages and complications of the world. Similarly after Frodo puts on the Ring when fleeing from Boromir, Frodo sits upon the ancient throne at Amon Hen and looks around the country:

But everywhere he looked he saw signs of war. The Misty Mountains were crawling like anthills: orcs were issuing out of a thousand holes. Under the boughs of Mirkwood there was deadly strife of Elves and Men and fell beasts. The land of the Beornings was aflame; a cloud was over Moria; smoke rose on the borders of Lórien. Horsemen were galloping on the grass of Rohan; wolves poured out of Isengard. From the havens of Harad ships of war put out to sea; and out of the East Men were moving endlessly: swordsmen, spearmen, bowmen upon horses, chariots of chieftains and laden wains. All the power of the Dark Lord was in motion. (*Fellowship* 518)

This passage is indicative of Tolkien's chaotic world where he saw despair and destruction. Tolkien invented a detailed and panoramic view of a cosmos in movement and turmoil (Thomson 49).

Nevertheless, Sale contends that Tolkien was able to come back to the present and face that which made him withdraw. Sale indicates a passage where Pippin is describing the eyes of the ent Treebeard:

One felt as if there was an enormous well behind them, filled up with ages of memory and long, slow steady thinking; but their surface was sparkling with the present; like sun shimmering on the outer leaves of a vast tree, or on the ripples of a very deep lake. I don't know, but it felt as if something that grew in the

groundslap, you might say, or just feeling itself as something between root-tip and leaf-tip, between deep earth and sky had suddenly waked up, and was considering you with the same slow care that it had given to its own inside affairs for endless years. (*Tower* 83)

For Tolkien, Recovery illustrates his belief in the aliveness of the world. Sale maintains, "He has taken ancientness from forest, mind from man, color and life from sun and tree and made an ent; 'in such 'fantasy,'" as Tolkien has said, "new form is made; Fakrie is made; Man becomes a sub-creator" (Sale 215-21). Frodo returns to Shire seeking renewal and recovery of health; Frodo accomplishes the renewal but does not recover his health. The quest to achieve order over chaos was costly; the Recovery brings sorrow as the Third Age ends and the Fourth Age begins.

As Frodo completes his task to destroy the Ring in the fires of Mount Doom and the Fellowship of the Ring is united in harmony, Tolkien himself wondrously and elaborately fulfills his quest to write a fairy story. Tolkien's trilogy, an imitation of his era, reveals his ideology. Living in a world of uncertainty and unpredictability and chaos, Tolkien imposes order and stability through his words in the thoroughly created and imaginative universe of his trilogy. His words weave a pattern in the fabric of his fairy story interlacing disorder with order; nevertheless, Tolkien renews order and harmony what he named Recovery. For Tolkien, Recovery is a moral and aesthetic vision of the world; furthermore, Recovery is a regaining of a clear view of nature, of man, and of the truths of life. Applying chaos theory to *The Lord of the Rings* provides a map that assists the reader's journey through the interlaced layers of disorderly order in Tolkien's Middle-earth.

In the role as sub-creator, J. R. R. Tolkien survives the depths of time and space revealing threads and weaves in the pattern of his trilogy. Chaos theory opens the portal aiding the reader's passage through multilayers of certainty and uncertainty, good and evil, light and darkness, and order and disorder found in Middle-earth. Indeed, this application enhances the reader's appreciation of Tolkien's skill as a philologist. In Tolkien's imaginative world, tumultuous forces interweave in a dynamic process. Even as the forces are driven towards chaos, an underlying force provides balance and stability. Chaos theory highlights the patterns in the fabric of *The Lord of the Rings*, that is Tolkien's skill as a philologist and sub-creator, and contributes to a distinct understanding of his works. ~

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