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The Embeddedness of Mind, Body and Spirit in Nature: An Exploration of Ecopsychological Tenets in *The Lord of the Rings*

Cansu Özdemir Ağlar¹

ORCID: 0000-0002-8576-5904

İfakat Banu Akçeşme²

ORCID: 0000-0002-8217-9360

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Abstract

Tolkien's trilogy - *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), and *The Return of the King* (1955) - is among the most analysed and studied classics in the world. It contains various themes which can be explored from several perspectives and in different contexts. The way nature is represented with the attribution of strong agency and the significance of strong communication between the human psyche and nature are worth mentioning since the trilogy provides an opportunity to explore the ecopsychological cruciality of human-nature togetherness for tranquillity in the human soul and sanity in the human mind. Moreover, with fictional places like Mordor and Isengard, the trilogy brings the degradation and destruction of nature to attention. Elvish geographies and the Shire enable us to appreciate and celebrate reciprocal and affirmative relations with nature. The psychology, unity, and agency of Nature with spiritual and fantastic characters such as Ents are foregrounded in the novel. By focusing on the fictional characters, this article aims to explore the ecopsychological facets of the places in the trilogy and how the human psyche is affected depending on natural or greenless places.

Keywords: Ecopsychology, Nature, J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*.

Zihin, Beden ve Ruhun Doğa ile İç İçeiliği: Yüzüklerin Efendisi'ndeki Ekopsikolojik İlkelerin Keşfi

Öz

Tolkien'in üçlemesi – *Yüzük Kardeşliği* (1954), *İki Kule* (1954) ve *Kralın Dönüşü* (1955) – dünyada en çok incelenen ve çalışılan klasikler arasındadır. Farklı bakış açılarından ve farklı bağlamlarda keşfedilebilir birçok tema içerir. Üçleme insan ruhundaki sakinlik ve aklındaki sağlık için insan-doğa birlikteliğinin ekopsikolojik önemini keşfetmekte bir fırsat tanıdığı için güçlü bir öz-nellikle doğanın temsil ediliş şekli, insan ruhu ve doğa arasındaki güçlü iletişim bahsetmeye değerdir. Buna ek olarak Mordor ve Isengard gibi kurgusal mekanlarla üçleme, dikkati doğanın aşığılanmasına ve yıkımına çekmektedir. Öte taraftan Elf coğrafyaları ve Shire doğayla karşılıklı ve olumlu ilişkinin değerini anlamamıza ve kutlamamıza imkân tanımaktadır. Romanda Entler gibi ruhani ve fantastik karakterlerle doğanın psikolojisi, bütünlüğü ve özneliği öne çıkarılmıştır. Kurgusal karakterlere yoğunlaşarak bu makale üçlemedeki mekanların ekopsikolojik yönlerini ve insan ruhunun doğal ya da yeşilsiz mekanlara bağlı olarak nasıl etkilendiğini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekopsikoloji, Doğa, J. R. R. Tolkien, *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*.

¹ Instructor, Sivas Science and Technology University, the School of Foreign Languages. ozzdemircns@gmail.com

² Assoc. Prof. Dr., Erciyes University, English Language and Literature Department. banu_akcesme@hotmail.com

Introduction

Ecopsychology is the common ground where psychological and ecological theories and principles have been incorporated. Ecopsychology as a concept emerged along with the work of Robert Greenway who put forward the idea that “the mind is nature, and nature, the mind” and he introduced his theory called psychoecology in 1963 during his graduate studies at Brandeis University.³ In 1990, the cultural historian Theodore Roszak came up with the term ecopsychology in his work *The Voice of the Earth* which was published in 1992. Ecopsychology is based on the idea that “ecology needs psychology, psychology needs ecology”⁴; thus, aims to bring together “the sensitivity of therapists, the expertise of ecologists, and the ethical energy of environmental activists.”⁵ Unlike the traditional and mainstream schools of psychology, ecopsychology does not merely pay attention to intrapsychic mechanisms but recognizes and foregrounds the interrelation and interdependence between the individual psyche and the Earth since there are undeniable and insuppressible deep connections between these two. Although ecopsychology is a recently coined term, its assumptions and notions can be traced back to pagan or indigenous cultures which celebrate an “animistic vision of the world”, its spirituality, and “environmental reciprocity”; “once upon a time, all psychology was ecopsychology.”⁶ In traditional societies, for instance, magicians acted as ecologists and “ecological philosophers.”⁷ Ecological consciousness was more vivid and prevalent in the past and it was not something to be awakened or enlivened but an active part of everyday life and daily practices. Thus, many ecopsychologists like Roszak emphasize the importance of revisiting and relearning the indigenous cultures and their environmental habits.

Like many other fields of studies, psychology has been greening and inevitably taken into consideration ecological concerns and consciousness with the acknowledgment that psychologically disturbed individuals of the Anthropocene are living on an extremely degraded planet and the human psyche entrapped in civilized culture and standing in seclusion needs immersion and merging with the natural world for healing. Since psychology is the comprehensive study of the soul, it is essential and crucial to delve into the nature of the soul and understand what people need, desire, love, hate, and fear.⁸ Psychology without an ecological dimension cannot thoroughly and fully provide insight into the human soul and psyche. Psychologists who are concerned about the well-being of the Earth cooperate with ecologists in order to raise consciousness about the necessity of a radical change in the minds and hearts of human beings for the attainment of good environmental citizenship. Depth psychology can be given as an example of green psychology. One of the basic questions depth psychology deals with is “What would a psychology look like that is based on an ecocentric worldview rather than an egocentric one?”⁹ Depth ecopsychology is an attempt to break with ego-oriented psychology and highlights

³ Robert Greenway, “Ecopsychology: A Personal History,” retrieved 22 September 2023. <https://www.ecopsychology.org/journal/gatherings/personal.htm>

⁴ Theodore Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 5.

⁵ L.R. Brown, “Ecopsychology and the Environmental Revolution: An Environmental Foreword” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, healing the mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), xvi.

⁶ Theodore Roszak, “Where psyche meets Gaia” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 5-6.

⁷ David Abram, “The Ecology of Magic” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 301.

⁸ Roszak, “Where psyche meets Gaia,” XV.

⁹ Stephen Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 98.

how wellbeing is very much related to the attainment of eco-conscious mentality. Depth psychologists maintain that the plight of the world results from human follies, wrongdoings, and ills: “The suffering in the world is reflected in and interactive with the suffering of human beings.”¹⁰ The corruption, misery and degeneration in the world are certainly experienced and strongly influence the mankind. By pointing out the interconnectedness, depth psychology reconsiders psychopathology in a context that takes into consideration the other presences in the world. Thus, destroying the rhythm and psyche of nature certainly brings self-destruction to mankind. Psychological health can be obtained and maintained through individual wholeness which is based on the integration of the psyche of the non-human experience into the individual psyche and nurturing human relationships with nature.

Ecopsychology aims to foreground the psychological aspect of the human-nature relation since according to ecopsychologists, what environmental movement lacks a “psychological impact statement.”¹¹ This suggests that the integration of the psychological dimension will certainly increase the effectiveness of environmental activism by appealing to the minds and hearts of the people. The basic notion ecopsychology highlights is that we are not isolated beings but physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally connected to the rest of the creation in the interwovenly connected web of life. “The deepest levels of the psyche merge with the biological body (Freud) and the physical stuff of the world (Jung).”¹² What we need is the embodied intelligence to recognize that we are part of a larger community that contains non-human entities. Ecopsychologists strive to help people gain an understanding of interdependencies among the different forms of existence, which is necessary to undo the devastating effects of the Anthropocene and learn to care for the planet both for the sake of the human and the non-human since whatever happens to us happens to the outside world and whatever happens to the environment happens to us. Ecopsychology suggests that the more nature deteriorates, the more grief we feel in our bodies and souls. Thus, the physical and mental wellbeing of human beings are closely connected to the health of the planet: When we prosper, we all prosper; when we suffer, we all suffer. There is a mutual influence between the human and the non-human and human beings change and shape the environment as much as they are shaped and changed by the other forms of beings in the physical world. Thus, as Armstrong asserts, “our most essential responsibility is to learn to bond our whole individual selves and our communal selves to the land.”¹³ It is because we are not only social and cultural but at the same time ecological beings and the ecological self is an inherent part of human existence.

Exposure to nature has proven to be rewarding and promising thanks to the benefits this experience provides for us. Harmonizing our lives with nature and nature’s rhythms offers a life-affirming experience and healing for our bodies, minds, and souls. As Richard Louv, who coined the term Nature Deficit Disorder argues, “Nature is not only nice to have, but it’s a have-to-have for physical health and cognitive functioning.”¹⁴ David Abram in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous* maintains that spending time in the natural environment

¹⁰ Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 99.

¹¹ Roszak, “Where psyche meets Gaia,” xiv.

¹² J. A Hillman, “Psyche the size of the Earth: A Psychological Foreword” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 98.

Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” xix.

¹³ J. Armstrong, “Keepers of the Earth” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 323.

¹⁴ Richard Louv, *Last child in the woods* (Algonquin Books, 2005).

brings human beings to their senses.¹⁵ Being and living in the physical world provides natural gaiety and mindfulness by deepening our empathy and embodied awareness. Ian McCallum (2008) suggests that a meaningful and fecund relation with nature helps us to practice self-improvement and self-exploration by achieving personal integrity, wholeness, and a better understanding of the self.¹⁶ This is essential for self-development in health, creativity, and productivity. A true and sincere understanding of nature also leads to the attainment of wisdom and a more fulfilling life. The healing and therapeutic power of nature can relieve pain, stress, and traumas, and reduce tendencies for violence and aggression.

Environmental sanity is one of the issues ecopsychology addresses. Identifying the reasons that make us feel unhappy and desolate is as crucial as finding out what makes us happy. Theodore Roszak (1992), in *The Voice of the Earth*, suggests that the “repression of the ecological unconscious is the deepest root of the collusive madness in industrial society; open access to the ecological unconscious is the path to sanity.”¹⁷ The separation between nature and human is an illusion and has been artificially created; this culturally and ideologically imposed disconnection from the non-human world is a self-destructive and ecocidal practice and has created the ills of the modern world. It also causes self-hatred and distrust for the other beings. The disconnection between mind, body culture, and nature leads to fragmented thinking that comes from a mechanical worldview. As a result, the earth is viewed as an inert, passive and servile matter with no capacity to hear, feel, and express her intentions. Thus, it is important to gain environmental awareness of the “subjectivity in animals, plants, wells, springs, trees, and rocks”¹⁸ to found an egalitarian community in which we all mutually participate as equal partners. Hillman asserts that “Psychology, so dedicated to awakening human consciousness, needs to wake itself up, to one of the most ancient human truths; we cannot be studied, or cured apart from the planet.”¹⁹ Human beings have denied, ignored or neglected their deep connection with the Earth and cannot relearn how to live in harmony with nature. We are suffering from collective amnesia since “we have forgotten something our ancestors once knew and practiced – certain attitudes and kinds of perception, an ability to empathize and identify with non-human life, respect for the mysterious, and humility in relationship to the infinite complexities of the natural world.”²⁰ We naturally belong to nature and it is this connection from which we get the strength and support necessary to tackle harsh conditions and tough moments during our life crises.

Human behavior is rooted most deeply in nature’s intentions – that our actions are fundamentally expressions of nature’s desire. The rhythms of nature underlie all of human interaction, religious traditions, economic systems, cultural and political organization. When these human forms betray the natural psychic pulse, people and societies get sick, nature is exploited, and entire species are threatened.²¹

When human beings turn their back on nature, they are inevitably further detached from the self. The loss of contact with nature and nature’s rhythm leads to the loss of contact with the rhythm of the inner self. Every human act that gives harm to nature ruins human’s bodily and mental health. For this reason, ecopsychology aims to investigate and identify the “hidden” and “irrational” sources of our ruinous ecological ha-

¹⁵ David Abram, *The spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human world* (USA: Vintage Books, 1997).

¹⁶ Ian McCallum, *Ecological Intelligence: Rediscovering Ourselves in Nature* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008).

¹⁷ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*, 320.

¹⁸ Hillman, “Psyche the size of the Earth: A Psychological Foreword,” xxii.

¹⁹ Hillman, “Psyche the size of the Earth: A Psychological Foreword,” xxii.

²⁰ Ralph Metzner, “The Psychopathology of the Human-Nature Relationship” in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, M.E. Gomes and A.D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 61.

²¹ Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 93.

bits and calamitous environmental attitudes and practices.²² Deborah DuNann Winter (2003), in *Ecological Psychology: Healing the Split Between Planet and Self*, argues that since environmental problems are generally caused by human actions, attitudes, preferences, and values, psychology should be viewed as an essential part of the problem-solving process.²³ Any damage we cause to nature increases our biopsychosocial vulnerability which can lead to psychopathology. Depth psychology with an ecopsychological insight asserts that bodily illnesses are closely connected to our dysfunctional relationship to nature. That we are estranged from the natural rhythms of the world leads to physical distress and ailments. Metzner also points out the relation between hazardous environmental behavior and psychopathological results like denial, psychic numbing, and disassociation and suggests that the split and alienation between human consciousness and the earth brings about mental disorders and ecologically disastrous results.²⁴ In this sense, the planet is likened to a “blank psychiatric screen on which the neurotic unconscious projects its fantasies”²⁵ since the outside nature is a mirror held up to inner human nature. The destructive acts directed at nature reflect bad human traits, corrupting desires, and evil temptations. Paul Shepard (2011) explains that the destructiveness of mankind has been intensified by agricultural activities and Judeo-Christian civilization which he holds responsible for collective pathology and ontogenetic crippling.²⁶ Andy Fisher (2003), in his book *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, broadened the framework of ecopsychology to emphasize the interconnectedness between the individual, environment, and economy and touched on the detrimental impact of the exploitative capitalist economic model on the wellbeing of both nature and the human psyche.²⁷ Along with the rise of the capital and growth-oriented industrial society, consumerism has become the primary cultural attitude and unfortunately, as Al Gore suggests, “we are all addicted to the consumption of the Earth.”²⁸ Ecopsychology spotlights the importance of abandoning our habits of consumerism and establishing a more balanced relation of giving and taking with nature to lead a more productive and healthy life.

In Western thinking, nature is closely associated with animalistic desires, bodily needs, and emotions and thus downgraded and rejected. Since the self cannot be separated from the world, the connection between human consciousness and the natural world should be rebuilt by gaining the recognition that “there is a greater ecological intelligence deeply rooted” in the constitution of the human psyche which is “the most authentic source of our individual areas.”²⁹ A respectful and sustaining relationship with nature can be possible only by developing a sensibility for the psyche of nature. The psychic landscape mirrors the natural world since human life bears “the projections and personifications of the soul that reside in the creatures and things of the world.”³⁰ Every single entity in the world, both the organic and inorganic, has a subjective inner psyche, and their inner natures constitute the world unconscious which is “the deeper and wider dimension of the psyche than that of the personal or collective unconscious.”³¹ Thus, access to the depth of the human psyche provides

²² Roszak, “Where psyche meets Gaia,” 19.

²³ Deborah DuNann, *Ecological Psychology: Healing the Split Between Planet and Self* (Psychology Press, 2003).

²⁴ Metzner, “The Psychopathology of the Human-Nature Relationship,” 55.

²⁵ Roszak, “Where psyche meets Gaia,” 5.

²⁶ Paul Shepherd, *Nature and Madness* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011).

²⁷ Andy Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003).

²⁸ Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (NY: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 220.

²⁹ Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 97.

³⁰ Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 98.

³¹ Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 95.

“access to the inner life, the soul, of the creatures and things of our world” by enhancing “the capacity to hear, from the inside, the voices of those species and objects who help shape our experience, provide the source of our imagination - and who are in need of us.”³² Ecopsychology argues that the interiority of humans and the interiority of nature are not two different things but rather develop, change, deteriorate, or improve together and simultaneously. Only the recognition of the correlation and reciprocity between the psyche of humanity and the psyche of nature can ensure healing.

In the light of ecopsychological philosophies and from the perspective of the cruciality between nature and human inner sanity, the voluminous trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, provides a fertile ground for the consideration of the theory. It depicts not only the harmonious and interwoven rhythm in nature but also its impact on the fictional characters’ psyche. This article aims to explore and analyze nature’s agency, the deep interdependence between nature and psychological wellbeing, and how devastating the results might be when human beings are surrounded by greenlessness.

1. Mind in Nature, Nature in Mind

Tolkien’s special love of flora and fauna is apparent throughout his mythology. The story includes the whole ecology encapsulating bioregions, trees, woods, different plant species, the Sun, and the Moon by reflecting the wholeness of the universe. These elements are not objects which the other characters control, but they have agency. Nature emerges as one of the leading actors of Tolkien’s mythology. Natural elements can also find a context and language where they can reflect and verbalize their inner emotional states. This gives the reader the chance to delve into the psychology of not only people but also the leading natural entities.

Among more than fifty plant species that Tolkien uses in his story, his central interest lies in trees. Old Man Willow, The White Tree of Gondor, Hobbits Party Trees, and the important forests such as Lothlórien, Mirkwood, Trollshows, and Fangorn are unique and play significant roles throughout the text. Moreover, although it is not presented in the trilogy, Tolkien also depicts the images of nature in his cosmogonic stories with the trees of Laurelin and Telperion, the descendants of the first sources of light. On the other hand, Ents, the sentient, and enduring ancient members of the novel, are spiritual figures that symbolize the psyche of nature. They dwell inside the trees and protect them from several dangers in the outside world. The critical point here is that along with the trees, many other elements of nature in the fantasy have their own authentic selves and act on their own will.

The first example that demonstrates the subjectivity of nature is the scene of the destruction of Isengard. It is a successful assault on the lands of Saruman, launched and conducted by a group of Ents. Saruman is the enemy and destroyer of nature. As a submissive servant to Sauron, Saruman cuts trees, blocks currents of water, and dries out the land for the sake of creating Uruk-hai, who would attempt to erase all the beauty in nature for the sake of bringing their leader into power. What he creates in Isengard is a kind of factory which is very similar to the atmosphere after the Industrial Revolution. No one can describe Sauron better than the Ent, Treebeard, who also carries the same name as the forest he dwells, Fangorn. On his journey with the two hobbits, Merry and Pippin, Treebeard explains that Saruman, once a kind, respectful, and friendly wizard, was not evil from the beginning but transformed into a wicked character later: “He is plotting to become a Power.

³² Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 97.

He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, [...] And now it is clear that he is a black traitor.”³³ In fact, Saruman here stands for the mentality of all humans - especially in the Anthropocene - who are gradually exterminating forests for the sake of power and economic gains. This is the outcome of the industrial and technocratic minds of our age. The novel offers a critique of human existence heavily relying on industrial production with no respect for the wellbeing of the natural environment. In the face of Saruman’s industrial greed, Ents, the souls of nature, decide to take action to save and protect the endangered environment. They tear apart Isengard, which leads to the rise of Ents. This is the consequence of mentally, physically, and emotionally distancing from nature and acting upon it by denying its intrinsic value.

Barry Commoner points out an integrated universe as the first law of ecology by stating “Everything is connected to everything else.”³⁴ The significant notion underlined is “even the smallest, most remote part” has a “relation to a very large whole.”³⁵ Not only the physical presence of a human, but also his/her psychology is a part of a huge universal network. Therefore, ecological changes, fluctuations in the biosphere, natural disasters, and alienation from nature create a kind of derangement in human’s conscious and unconscious mind. This broken relation has a negative impact on human psychology and is seen as the main reason for mental and spiritual crises and depression in the Anthropocene. The disorder in the psyche is metaphorically portrayed with such dark, frantic, reckless, selfish, evil, and cruel characters as Orcs and Uruk-hai, who live in desolated lands where there are no traces of greenness and life. Clearly, they stand for people who cut off their deep ancient connections with the whole universe and become puppets of their own shadow. Ents revolt against this disordered connection and desire to recreate tranquillity in nature and finally in mind.

What Treebeard says during the Isengard assault is extremely remarkable in representing the psychology and subjectivity of nature: “I am not altogether on anybody’s side, because nobody is altogether on my side, if you understand me: nobody cares for the woods as I care for them, not even Elves today.”³⁶ Nature is a lonely and living entity, sometimes fierce but mostly embracing. Even the Elves, who are at peace with greenness, may sometimes ignore the problems of the forests. They are cut down, tortured, killed, destroyed, and extinguished. The characterization and the portrayal of Elves reflect how helpless people may feel in the face of huge capitalist economies and how destructively overwhelming a desire for power can be. Whatever they do cannot compensate for the destruction of the planet.

Apart from the problematic helplessness of humans in the scene of Anthropocene, Treebeard’s quote above reminds us of Aizenstat’s concept of world unconscious. According to the ecopsychologist’s philosophy, all organic and inorganic forms of beings and nature itself have psychology. Humans are not the only species that has a soul; each member of this complicated intrinsic living system has a psyche. He points out a psychological network and states:

The world unconscious is a deeper and wider dimension of the psyche than that of the personal or collective unconscious. In the realm of the world unconscious, all creatures and things of the world are understood as interrelated and interconnected. Although there are clear differences in orders of complexity, I make the

³³ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (London: Harper Collins, 2017), 616.

³⁴ Barry Commoner, *The closing circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Random House Inc, 1971), 23.

³⁵ W. Rueckert, “Literature and Ecology: An experiment in Ecocriticism” in *The ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 108.

³⁶ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (London: Harper Collins, 2017), 617.

assumption that all the phenomena in the world possess intrinsic unconscious characteristics – subjective inner natures. I use the term “unconscious” realizing that, for the most part, it is we who are unconscious of these inner natures of the world’s other inhabitants. These inner natures of the world’s organic and inorganic phenomena make up the world unconscious.³⁷

With the characterization of Treebeard and the other Ents, Tolkien reflects the “inner natures of the world’s organic and inorganic phenomena”. In the story, in response to Saruman, the nature nemesis, Treebeard attacked Isengard with his army and destroyed the fortress. This scene can be regarded as the most important turning point where nature rises up to determine its own future. It clearly shows the subjectivity of nature and the unity in it. It is a living, self-determining, and distinct character and it has its own psychology with a capacity to respond to what is going on.

Treebeard could be one of the most fascinating ecopsychological representations in the story. He is the embodiment of the ancient wisdom of nature. With Tom Bombadil in the story, Ents are the most ancient members of the Middle-Earth. This situation is perfectly described by Pippin when he first meets Treebeard and describes his eyes:

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 ground – asleep, you might say, or just feeling itself as something between root-tip and leaf-tip, between deep earth and sky and 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.³⁸

This description allusively reminds us of Roszak’s “ecological unconscious”. According to him, inside our psyche – especially in our id or collective unconscious – lie our genetic codes which are evolutionary, ancient, and immemorial. As required by an ecopsychological principle, we should be aware of these codes and our deep connections to the outer world. We are an intrinsic part of the universe like all the natural elements. If we closely look at every tiny detail in nature, we feel much of the same way as Pippin does while he is directly looking at Treebeard’s eyes. We can also find “something growing in the ground” and “something growing inside us”, which finds its maturity and unity with the outer world and leads us to sanity. Gaining awareness concerning our deep relations with nature can be considered as the primary and crucial facet of ecopsychological philosophy. Pippin narrates his very humane emotions thanks to what he sees through Treebeard’s eyes with natural references such as “sun”, “leaves”, “ripple”, “lake”, “sky”, or “earth”. The feelings Pippin expresses reflect his discovery and relearning of the deep relation with nature as he finds deep inside his soul. To put it differently, he comes in touch with his ecological unconsciousness which enables him to experience the deep connection with the spirit of nature.

Apart from the attack on Isengard, another scene that demonstrates the self-determination of natural elements is Mount Caradhras. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, after the hobbits finally reach Rivendell, an elvish land, Elrond’s council decides that the Ring should be taken to Mount Doom and destroyed in Mordor. Nine characters are willing to undertake this tough responsibility and Frodo comes forward as “the Ring Bearer”. On their epic journey, they pass through various habitats. When they are faced with an obstacle in one of their planned routes, they decide to head for Caradhras where they find themselves in a blizzard, which is not a re-

³⁷ Aizenstat, “Jungian Psychology and the World Unconscious,” 96.

³⁸ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 603.

gular snowstorm for them. They apprehend this is the revelation of the anger of the mountain, as Gimli describes the psychological state of the mountain, “Caradhras has not forgiven us. [...] He has more snow yet to fling at us, if we go on.”³⁹ Thereafter, he comes to the understanding that the mountain has a mind of its own with an active agency for giving response and capacity for feeling and articulating emotions, “It was no ordinary storm. It is the ill will of Caradhras. He does not love Elves and Dwarves, and that drift was laid to cut off our escape.”⁴⁰ The mountain acts as a character and is gendered as a male figure which accentuates its aliveness, inclusion, and subjectivity. Later in the novel, the psychological state of the mountain is much better displayed by Tolkien. He describes the Company’s departure from the mountain, “And indeed with that last stroke the malice of the mountain seemed to be expended, as if Caradhras was satisfied that the invaders had been beaten off and would not dare to return.”⁴¹ The Company is defined as “invaders”, disrupting and disturbing the peace in the mountain. The Company can be understood as very similar to humans who destructively invade and degrade natural habitats in the real world.

The temperament and psychology of nature are also clearly reflected by the Old Forest in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Merry, on their journey to Rivendell, portrays the Old Forest as follows,

But the forest is queer. Everything in it is very much alive, more aware of what is going on, so to speak, than things are in the Shire. And the trees do not like strangers. They watch you. They are usually content merely to watch you, as long as daylight lasts, and don’t do much. Occasionally the most unfriendly ones may drop a branch, or stick a root out, or grasp at you with a long trailer. [...] I thought all the trees were whispering to each other, passing news and plots along in an unintelligible language; and the branches swayed and groped without any wind. They do say the trees do actually move, and can surround strangers and hem them in. In fact, long ago they attacked the Hedge: they came and planted themselves right by it, and leaned over it. But the hobbits came and cut down hundreds of trees, and made a great bonfire in the Forest, and burned all the ground in a long strip east of the Hedge. After that the trees gave up the attack, but they became very unfriendly.⁴²

The forest may seem menacing and furious because of their painful and traumatic experience; the inhabitants of the forest have been faced with death and extinction because of the thoughtless destruction of the woods by the hobbits. The forest displays psychological and physical responses to protect its dwellers. Thus, they are not inherently evil but defensively vigilant and reactionary. Another important point in this scene comes to attention in the expression “planted themselves”, which shows the determination and strong will of the Middle-earth forests. They can move and germinate wherever they wish to live. Nature, as a conscious being, is “aware of what is going on” and acts not only as a seer, observer, and listener but also as a doer and active participant.

Lothlórien, carrying a sharp conflict with Saruman’s and Sauron’s devilish, and greedy industrial atmosphere, is another important region which emphasizes animism and subjectivity in nature. It is also an illuminating example of what Roszak foregrounds. In order to illustrate the connectedness of humans with nature, which has already deteriorated, Roszak bases his philosophy on the Gaia hypothesis and *anima mundi*. With the help of James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, the Gaia hypothesis, which underlines that all beings on Earth constitute a self-regulating system to sustain life, has emerged. Borrowing the name of Greek goddess from mythology, they preferred to call this system Gaia, personified as a nurturing woman and a mother of

³⁹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 379.

⁴⁰ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 381.

⁴¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 382.

⁴² Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 144-145.

existence. *Anima mundi* is also accepted as the Earth's soul. It is thought to have started with Platonic philosophy. The *anima* has always been perceived as female. Roszak defines it as "the mentality in physicality." According to him, she is the "cosmic housekeeper."⁴³ Even if Gaia and her soul may seem to be remote ancient ideas from our age, Roszak thinks that

Gaia, taken simply as a dramatic image of ecological interdependence, might be seen as the evolutionary heritage that bonds all living things genetically and behaviourally to the biosphere. Just that much is enough to reverse the scientific worldview and all psychology based upon it.⁴⁴

Thinking that the first signs of life started with the Big Bang and all living organisms carry stardust inside, the intimate connection among species should not be surprising. Because starting from the beginning of the Earth over billions of years ago, each of us has genetic codes and evolutionary heritage. In fact, it is obvious that from the inside we are connected to the outside.

Frodo feels this vividness, synergy, and strong integrity within nature whenever he touches the tree of Lothlórien, which has an absolute contrast with the bareness of Mordor and Isengard.

[...] he laid his hand upon the tree beside the ladder: never before had he been so suddenly and so keenly aware of the feel and texture of a tree's skin and of the life within it. He felt a delight in wood and the touch of it, neither as forester nor as carpenter; it was the delight of the living tree itself.⁴⁵

The nature, full of spirits, infuses into Frodo's soul and mind immediately.

After Frodo's experience with the tree, Haldir, an Elf of Lothlórien, directs him to a platform where he can encounter different landscapes. One of the things that he sees is "a hill of many mighty trees, or a city of green towers: which it was he could not tell."⁴⁶ What Frodo feels under the influence of the view is obviously a clear indication of the positive influence of nature on human psychology, "Out of it, it seems to him that the power and light came that held all the land in sway. He longed suddenly to fly like a bird to rest in the green city."⁴⁷ Frodo, as emotionally, bodily, and mentally empowered, wants to be a part of this peaceful nature because, in fact, his spirit has already been enticed by the beauty of nature. When Roszak's account of the psyche's evolution is considered, Frodo's spirit has already been familiar with these natural elements from the very beginning. That is why he feels satisfyingly safe, comfortable, and pleasant in the natural scene and wants to become an integrated part of it. His soul and the sublime landscape merge as the human mind and nature do in real life. It has also a therapeutic impact on his soul, which once could be observed in the earth-oriented primitive societies because as Roszak strongly underlines, "[i]n tribal societies, the distinction between the physical and psychic is far less rigid than we understand it to be."⁴⁸ Soul and body are complementary and closely related to each other and hence, a positive feeling and the pleasing experience of the physical world can lead to psychic tranquillity and mental wellbeing as can be seen in this particular scene.

⁴³ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*, 139.

⁴⁴ Roszak, "Where psyche meets Gaia," 14.

⁴⁵ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 457.

⁴⁶ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 458.

⁴⁷ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 458.

⁴⁸ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*, 75.

Ecopsychologists seek ways to get back to and reestablish our original relation with the animate, and complex nature. This is also what Tolkien suggests in the trilogy as the examples presented above indicate. People need to reach the awareness that nature surrounding us is not an inanimate “thing” that we can control and subjugate for the sake of humans’ excessive needs or gains. On the contrary, it is completely an active agent with its own subjectivity. Thus, human beings should give up their bad environmental habits and stop instrumentalizing nature by acknowledging and appreciating its intrinsic value. The failure to do so will bring about disasters and catastrophic results that will put not only man’s living place but his mental and bodily health at risk because nature has the full capacity to respond back to all wrongdoings of human beings. To maintain mental sanity, humans should recognize our unity with nature. The next subtitle will analyse the significance of this integrity with nature.

2. Integrity with Nature, Health and Wellbeing

Tolkien’s mythology offers a universe where the connection between nature and the characters is foregrounded through the portrayal of two contrasting realms. The first one represents humans’ barren and dark existence because the characters turn against nature; furthermore, they slaughter natural elements and they are driven by a strong desire for power. There is no unity between nature and the people. The second world, on the other hand, stands for the integrity of the environment, flora, and fauna. In Middle-Earth, several fictional races signify the intimate togetherness of human existence and the cosmos.

One of the best examples representing the endless synergy between humans and nature in the trilogy is Elvish geographies. Elves, the most complicated society in the story, are the first and the eldest of all races. They are described as the noblest, the wisest, and the fairest of the Middle-Earth characters. Ecopsychology argues that not just with chemical compositions in their bodies, but also psychologically humans are intertwined with the cosmos. This fact is obviously clear in Elven landscapes. Elves have similar characteristics to humans. Like humans, they are capable of feeling an emotion such as ambition, love, and jealousy. Even if elves have human qualities, the basic psychological difference between elves and humans is that elves love stability and permanence. Elves strive to protect the existing state, which they think is the ideal form for them. Since they are in favour of the status quo, time unfolds very slowly as if it were a frozen land. They are strongly against industry and technology in such a sense that they are the direct antithesis of Mordor and Isengard. Instead, they invest their energy in expanding their knowledge and improving their skills such as history writing, beautifying a forest, or processing jewels. The reason why they are sceptical of change is because they fear that they may fail to protect and preserve the beauty of and their sustainable relation with nature which is their only home. Rivendell and Lothlórien, Elven homes in the trilogy, reflect these characteristic features of Elves and their cherished integration with nature. Tolkien describes how the land of Rivendell has a healing impact on the characters’ minds:

[...] such was the virtue of the land of Rivendell that soon all fear and anxiety was lifted from their [the hobbits’] minds. The future, good or ill, was not forgotten, but ceased to have any power over the present. Health and hope grew strong in them, and they were content with each good day as it came, taking pleasure in every meal, and in every word and song.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 356.

In the same chapter, Bilbo points out the stability, balance, and permanency that elves favour: “I can’t count days in Rivendell.”⁵⁰ The place is like a frozen grandeur.

Lothlórien is also characterized by stillness, stability, and balance as Sam clearly expresses, “It is wonderfully quiet here. Nothing seems to be going on, and nobody seems to want it to.”⁵¹ Sam also underlines the mutual and interdependent relation between humans and the natural environment: “[...] they [Elves] seem to belong here [Lothlórien], more even than Hobbits do in the Shire. Whether they’ve made the land, or the land’s made them, it’s hard to say, if you take my meaning.”⁵² Elves and Lothlórien interconnectedly grow together as a network.

In another scene, Frodo’s feeling in his heart and soul while he is gazing at the forest from a high place explicitly shows how intact the forest is even if the elvish population has always been there.

Frodo stood awhile still lost in wonder. It seemed to him that he had stepped through a high window that looked on a vanished world. A light was upon it for which his language had no name. All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured forever. He saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as if he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful. In winter here no heart could mourn for summer or for spring. No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lórién there was no stain.⁵³

This quote also echoes Romantic implications. Frodo experiences some feelings which he cannot name. This is the same experience that the Romantic philosophers attained through their immersion and meditation in nature. In Romantic philosophy, nature awakens and stimulates human emotions and senses. Thus, a romantic call for the return to nature is essential in order to get the experience of primitivism and uncontaminated nature as can be observed in Lothlórien. They also highlight sublimity, awe, and admiration nature arouses. For Roszak, the sense of the sublime is also quite critical to achieve an ecopsychological worldview because in tribal cultures,

[...] it was a knowledge pure and potent of how the world truly is. But then, inevitably, the imagination, seeking to give that sense a shape, conceives of it as entities mentally and physically like ourselves. Such images symbolize what could not otherwise be put into words: the disembodied, ubiquitous, will and intelligence that acts powerfully all about us.

At least this is what I think the animist sensibility was like. I realize I must say cautiously little about it. For me that same world that once pulsed with spiritual vitality has lost its transparency; it has grown densely opaque. To that degree, it has been reduced. That eclipse of sacramental consciousness is the beginning of “modern civilization.”⁵⁴

In order to attain an ecological consciousness in every sphere of life, we need to sharpen our senses and remove the veil which has turned our nature “opaque” and covers our strong connectedness with nature as Lothlórien elves do.

The land of Shire with the hobbits dwelling there is characterized by integrity with nature, sanity, and harmony. Tolkien presents a “Prologue” to introduce hobbits, their lives, and their land, Shire, at the begin-

⁵⁰ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 356.

⁵¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 469.

⁵² Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 469.

⁵³ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 456.

⁵⁴ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*, 94.

ning of the trilogy. The Shire is a small but fertile land where they enjoy and appreciate green hills, peaceful valleys, colourful gardens, and various flowers. Its inhabitants feel a deep and strong sense of belonging and devotion to their land and although it is densely populated, the hobbits never harm the natural environment and meticulously preserve the green areas. They absolutely lack destructive instincts. The hobbits do not have a vertical architectural design which is quite widespread in urban settings; instead, they competently make themselves fit into the land which they make their home. They traditionally live in hobbit-holes which are built in hillsides or banks. In that sense, their relationship with nature is close – but not similar to that of elves who make the trees their home. Thomas Honegger points out the comparison between the Elven land, Lothlórien, and the Shire: “The timelessness and otherworldly seclusion of the elven-homestead is incompatible with the rustic and petit bourgeois homeliness of the hobbit homeland. Therefore, we may call the Shire “the heart” of Middle-Earth – and Lothlórien “the soul.”⁵⁵

The Shire has always attracted the critical attention of scholars because of the symbolism it suggests. Historically, literarily, and politically, the Shire embodies myriad themes. Honegger states that “The smallish country inhabited by the hobbits is the very epitome of a pre-industrial idyll.”⁵⁶ The Shire displays the pastoral beauty and directly it is contrasted with Isengard and Mordor, dominated by a high industry and manufacture. The hobbits have constructed an extensive agricultural system in the Shire; however, it is not conducted with industrialization but based on sustainable agricultural practices as Tolkien describes: the hobbits “[...] used their own fashion.”⁵⁷ This “fashion” is nature friendly. As opposed to the metal-headed Saruman, “They [the Hobbits] do not and did not understand or like machines more complicated than a forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom though they were skilful with tools.”⁵⁸ They represent the harmonious existence of humans totally interconnected with nature before the rise of a high industry that massively devastated both natural beauty and the human psyche. The Shire offers an alternative way of living by rejecting the life in the urbanized and industrialized setting.

Moorman also underlines the idyllic image of the Shire: “But for all its good humour and simplicity, the Shire is static, self-satisfied, and complacent. It is by no means Eden, for although the Shire is free from major crimes, there are the inevitable family feuds and squabbles, the usual nastiness and pretty thievery.”⁵⁹ What the readers can observe in this landscape is mainly peace, bliss, and comfort. The hobbits, most of whom are farmers, have deep love and concern for the soil: “Hobbits are unobtrusive but very ancient people, more numerous formerly than they are today; for they love peace and quiet and good tilled earth: a well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favourite haunt.”⁶⁰ They are usually barefoot and rarely wear shoes. Tolkien presents some physical reasons behind this because they have thick, leathery, and hairy feet. Nevertheless, being barefoot enables them to feel the living land that gives energy to the body and the soul. It is also a clear indication of sincere and meaningful immersion of the hobbits in the earth and nature. Their physical embed-

⁵⁵ T. M. Honneger, “From Bag End to Lórien: The Creation of a Literary Work” in *News from the Shire and Beyond - Studies on Tolkien*, eds. P. Buchs and T. M. Honegger (Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers, 2004), 64.

⁵⁶ Honneger, “From Bag End to Lórien: The Creation of a Literary Work,” 64.

⁵⁷ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 9.

⁵⁸ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 1.

⁵⁹ C. Moorman, “The Shire, Mordor, and Minas Tirith” in *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings*, eds. N. D. Isaacs and R. A. Zimbardo (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 204.

⁶⁰ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 1.

dedness has a psychological impact in a positive sense. The hobbits are “a merry folk” with a sense of serenity and contentment.⁶¹ Thanks to their fruitful relationship with nature, they attain and preserve their sanity.

The hobbits are leading a secluded life and are not in touch with the wider world that lies outside their dwelling place. Thus, they are not very much aware of the problems and dangers of the outside world. They have very little information related to the other races, which is conveyed by the hobbits who have had enough courage to go beyond their borders. Even their maps reflect their lack of knowledge and connection with the outside world. The hobbits love map-making; however, their cartographic knowledge is limited to their own lands, and the places that remain outside their physical borders are left blank. These undiscovered and unexplored areas are defined as “terra incognita” by Honegger.⁶² Kırer approaches the Shire from a psychoanalytical perspective and associates the Shire with our conscious mind, the only world that we have access to and thus know.⁶³ In that sense, the journey taken by Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin is an attempt to reach and explore the unconscious. They leave the land familiar to them and set out for the unknown and unidentified. In every step of this journey, they experience different mental and emotional states and go through psychological fluctuations under the influence of the different environments they are passing through.

The Shire is where the journey starts. It is a safe and comfortable place for the inhabitants. The inhabitants of Shire are only concerned about their daily routines with no direct experience of the instability and insecurity in the outside lands. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when Frodo realizes that he has to leave the Shire in order to take the ring out of this peaceful and tranquil landscape to keep any possible harm, threat, and menace away, he expresses his sadness because of his deep integrity with the Shire.

I should like to save the Shire, if I could – though there have been times when I thought the inhabitants too stupid and dull for words, and have felt that an earthquake or an invasion or dragons might be good for them. But I don't feel like that now. I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again.⁶⁴

Frodo's devotion to the Shire along with the sense of security and balance this land radiates is empowering, through which Frodo finds the mental and mental strength, motivation, determination, and courage to undertake this very dangerous journey to the unknown. Honegger argues that the Shire functions as an archetypal figure. “The Shire becomes the reader's archetypal homeland, ‘the place’ pure and simple.”⁶⁵ He also maintains that neither Rivendell nor Lothlórien can make us appreciate the place we are a part of or give us the exact feeling of being home at ease. “He [Tolkien] does not really need the idealised homestead of Rivendell nor the transcendental beauty of Lothlórien to make us care for the fate of Middle-Earth.”⁶⁶

In the trilogy, whenever the hobbits suffer from intense fear, despair, and hopelessness, they take shelter in the image of the Shire, which disseminates a feeling of comfort, safety, and relief. The tower of Cirith Ungol is a good example. This place is located in the dark lands of Mordor, whose gloomy and evil atmosphere has a negative psychological impact on Sam and Frodo. In his search for Frodo, Sam follows a very dangerous road

⁶¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 2.

⁶² Honegger, “From Bag End to Lórien: The Creation of a Literary Work,” 66.

⁶³ Oğuz Kırer, “The archetypal criticism of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*” (MA Thesis, Erciyes University, 2010), 13-14.

⁶⁴ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 82.

⁶⁵ Honegger, “From Bag End to Lórien: The Creation of a Literary Work,” 65.

⁶⁶ Honegger, “From Bag End to Lórien: The Creation of a Literary Work,” 67.

up to the Cirith Ungol. Upon the terror that he experiences, he thinks about the Shire and sings his native rhyme to ease his heart and mind. “He [Sam] murmured old childish tunes out of the Shire, and snatches of Mr. Bilbo’ rhymes that came into his mind like fleeting glimpses of the country of his home. And then suddenly new strength rose in him, [...]”⁶⁷ The image of a natural land and its deep relation with its inhabitants provide the life-saving and affirming energy the characters need to go on and achieve their goals. This scene perfectly shows that the actual power required for the struggle and resistance against the destructive and hostile forces and the mental wellbeing can be obtained thanks to integration, connections, and relations in nature as suggested by Gandalf, “Indeed there is a power in Rivendell to withstand the might of Mordor, for a while: and elsewhere other powers still dwell. There is power, too, of another kind in the Shire.”⁶⁸

When the Shire is taken as the representation of our conscious mind or the symbol of our archetypal home, from an ecopsychological point of view it embodies our distant long-forgotten primal integrity with the land which has not been contaminated by the high industry and technology or by excessive human hubris and insatiable greed for power, domination, and possession. The inhabitants of the land are exultant, self-sufficient, and self-complacent. They are naive, which is reflected even through their appearance. They are plain members of the ecological network and simply enjoy their lives while eating, drinking, and dancing. They seem to be id-driven beings, but not in a Freudian sense. The ecopsychological vision of id which points out to the healthy interconnection with nature as stated by Roszak can be found within the borders of the Shire. Roszak does not totally perceive id as the sum of all human sexual instincts, pleasures, and childish desires. Defining Freud as a Social Darwinist, Roszak tries to point out this model as a misconception of id. According to him, under the savage appearance of id, there is “wisdom”. He states that with Social Darwinism, Freud

[...] reinforced his conception of the id as a fiercely predatory of prey stalking the jungles of the unconscious. But this is absurd. The id is that very protohuman psychic core that our evolution has spent millions of years molding to fit the planetary environment.⁶⁹

In the story, with their appearance and way of life, hobbits carry this wisdom perfectly.

The hobbits can be viewed as the representation of a prototypical and agrarian society which shares mutual respect and egalitarian relations with nature. Their harmonious relation with their environment positively affects their psychology. They are luckily devoid of Mordorian lust for domination and destruction, they have no zest for elven highness or dwarvian greed for mines and gems, and they have no tendencies for romanticization. The hobbits can be acknowledged as the better version of human beings with their sustainable and pristine lifestyles. Although they are of small bodily size, they fulfil crucial roles in the story. Frodo carries out the task of carrying the unbearable burden of the ring to Mordor. Sam, who remains committed and loyal to his friends, functions as the embodiment of ideal friendship. Merry and Pippin are the initiators of the Isengard assault by the Ents, without which defeating the enemy would not be possible. With the key roles assigned to the hobbits, Tolkien displays the fact that the real power and sanity stem from connectedness, relatedness and interdependencies among the natural entities. Hobbits have adopted the ecological philosophy of “live and let live” and care for and support the health, maintenance, and stability of the ecosystem. So far, the positive

⁶⁷ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (London: Harper Collins, 2017), 1188.

⁶⁸ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 290.

⁶⁹ Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*, 289.

influence of nature on human well-being is examined and the next part will place the focus on how “naturelessness” degrades the psyche of the characters.

3. Greenlessness: Destruction, Insanity, and Chaos

Tolkien highlights the correlation between sanity and the intimate relationship between humans and nature. This parallelism also leads us to the idea that exposure to greenless, desolate and dark places can bring about insanity or various mental and physical problems and disturbances. Mordor and Isengard can be regarded as the two symbolical representations of what may happen if humans neglect their environmental responsibilities and wrongly judge their place and centralize their existence in the universe. With the help of these lands, Tolkien criticizes how an industrial way of living determines and controls our mentality, practices, perceptions, and responses. Moreover, he emphasizes that humans are gradually detached from their widest home, that is, nature, and in the end, from their microcosmic home, body, and mind.

Mordor, which functions as the direct opposition to the harmonious and peaceful Shire, and elven plains is a black, volcanic, gloomy, and greenless land of Middle-Earth. It is owned and ruled by the Dark Lord, Sauron, who is described as the explicit epitome of pure evil. Tolkien describes him as the “reincarnation of Evil, and a thing lusting for Complete Power – and so consumed ever more fiercely with hate (especially of gods and Elves).”⁷⁰ The name of this bleak geography derives from Sindarin, one of the fictional languages that Tolkien created. It means “*Black Lands*”.⁷¹ Phonetically, it is also very close to the English word “murder”. Spacks, to underline the greenlessness in Mordor and its connection with the evil force, points out that “The Enemy’s territory, even its outskirts is physically and morally a Wasteland; the implication is strong that the barrenness of nature here is a direct result of the operations of evil.”⁷² Thinking all these, Mordor absolutely signifies the death of nature where fear, peril, and evil pervade and thus no one can dare to explore this place. The famous line “[...] *the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie*” not only emphasizes the dark and malicious atmosphere of Mordor but also underlines that the dwellers of this land are very much like “shadow.”⁷³

Along with its supreme possessor, the land is highly populated by the fictional race, Orcs. They are the primary forces and servants of the Dark Lord. They have a human shape in different sizes. They are described as monstrous and filthy characters who feed on flesh including humans. The process of creation of this race has never been explained in Tolkien legendarium in detail; however, the writer, in some of his letters and works, reveals several clues about the creation and first appearance of orcs. He describes them as the “corruptions of the ‘human’ form seen in Elves and Men. They are (or were) squat, broad, flat-nose, sallow-skinned with wide mouths and slant eyes.”⁷⁴ “Orcs [...] are nowhere clearly stated to be of any particular origin. But since they are

⁷⁰ J. R. R. Tolkien, “To Milton Waldman” in *The letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter (London: George Allan and Unwin, 1981), 172.

⁷¹ Tolkien, “To Milton Waldman,” 195.

⁷² P. M. Spacks, “Power and Meaning in *The Lord of the Rings*” in *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings*, eds. N. D. Isaacs and R. A. Zimbaro (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 84.

⁷³ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 66.

⁷⁴ Tolkien, “From a Letter to Forrest J. Ackerman,” 293.

servants of the Dark Power,⁷⁵ and later of Sauron, neither of whom could or would produce living things, they must be “corruptions.”⁷⁶

In *The Silmarillion*, he directly points out that the Dark Power, Melkor, transforms some of the elves into the fictional evil race, orcs. Some of the elves “[...] by slow acts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of Orcs in envy and mockery of the elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes.”⁷⁷ This fact is also implied and referred to in *The Return of the King* by Frodo after Sam saved him from Cirith Ungol,

The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don't think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them; and if they are to live at all, they have to live like other living creatures.⁷⁸

Orcs have some fundamental differences from elves. Since orcs are the degenerated and corrupted form of elves, these differences become more of an issue from an ecopsychological perspective. These two fictional races – once the same - live in totally incompatible environments. The strong synergy between nature and elves has been reflected not only through their lofty physical appearance but also their sane mentality. Elven plains are peaceful and curative. So is the soul of elves. On the other side, darkness, evil, naturelessness, lust for power, and destruction have created malignant characters like orcs and Uruk-hai of Isengard. W. H. Auden argues that the only instinct of orcs is “to kill”.⁷⁹ Elves, on the contrary, always keep the balance and the stability of the biosphere. Their aim is not to vandalise and exterminate other species but to sustain a reciprocal and respectful life on earth, which is the ultimate goal of ecopsychology.

While commenting on the similarity among the three races, David Tneh reaches quite a significant conclusion which may also lead us to ecopsychological interpretations.

[...] importance of the image of Man in the Orcs, Elves, and Men is undeniable. This image also gives some depth to the Orcs as a shadowy and complex image of terror that is elusive in the saga. The strong image of Man in the Orcs serves as an important symbol that reflects the universal conditions of Man. Their embodiment of the fragmented image of humanity speaks of the plight of the human self that begs understanding towards the misguided race of Orcs. This image also unites the races and portrays the multiplicity of human conditions. By drawing on the image of Man, Tolkien has built the foundations of Middle-earth on common experiences and images that compel the reader towards an understanding of humanity and self.⁸⁰

Orcs, as the emblem of “universal conditions of Man”, are actually the representation of insanity, mental disorder, and what happens when humans are under the massive influence of their shadow. From this perspective, Sauron and his land, Mordor, become the symbols of the archetype shadow, composed of repressed ideas, desires, and instincts. It also includes aggression, destruction, greed, lust for power, and violence, all of which come together in the characterization of Sauron within the domain of Mordor. Hence, orcs symbolize the people who are completely controlled by their shadow, Sauron. The people driven by their dark sides have become

⁷⁵ Here with the expression of “the Dark Power”, Tolkien refers to Morgoth, also known as Melkor, predecessor of Sauron. He appears especially in *The Silmarillion*.

⁷⁶ Tolkien, “To Milton Waldman,” 195.

⁷⁷ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 58.

⁷⁸ Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 1195-1196.

⁷⁹ W. H. Auden, “Good and evil in *The Lord of the Rings*,” *Tolkien Journal* 3/1, (1967), 5.

⁸⁰ David Tneh, “The Human Image and the Interrelationship of the Orcs, Elves and Man,” *Mallorn: The Journey of the Tolkien Society* 55, (2014): 39.

alienated from nature, which eventually leads to self-alienation. Orcs live within the barren environment of Mordor, which is closely associated with madness and insanity. For the cure of this insanity, what is necessary is to attain ecological unconsciousness and re-establish the intimate connection between psyche and nature as Roszak proposes and Tolkien illustrates in the elven lands and Shire of hobbits.

As Hobbits and Elves act in harmony with the land they belong to, orcs' personalities reflect their black and hideous region. During their journey to destroy the Ring, Sam and Frodo, with the guidance of Gollum, reach the doors of Mordor, named Maronnon and Tolkien perfectly describes how malicious and barren the place is.

[...] here neither spring nor summer would ever come again. Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains has vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about High mounds of crush and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light.

They [Frodo, Sam, Gollum] had come to the desolation that lay before Mordor: the lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves that should endure when all their purposes were made void; a defiled diseased beyond all healing – unless the Great Sea should enter in and wash it with oblivion. “I feel sick,” said Sam.⁸¹

The consequences of the destruction of nature are very conspicuously illustrated here. The characters experiencing the atmosphere associate this place with “sickness” which is a mental and emotional response rather than a physical one. What they feel in Maronnon absolutely contradicts the way these two hobbits feel when they are in Shire or first arrive in Rivendell and Lothlórien, where they have found tranquillity, relief, and psychological healing. The natureless ambiance of Maronnon inflicts pain, unease, suffering, and disturbance on their mind, body, and soul. The malicious effect of this “filthy” land was overcome and purged away by a natural element, the sea which wiped out every little evil piece in the land as can be seen in the great attacks of Ents in Isengard.

Unlike Mordor, Isengard, the abode of Saruman, is not initially evil or natureless. However, Saruman, once thought of as a wise wizard, has gradually come under the influence of darkness springing from Mordor. He is dominated by a strong lust for conquest and absolute authority over the other Middle-Earth races and thus he yields to his irresistible dark sides and starts to establish complete mastery and control over nature by rearranging the physical world as he wishes. Even if he is named after “Saruman the White”, he is actually the greyest character where evil, darkness and light meet. His pride and greed have reached such an extreme level that in a discussion with Gandalf, who comes for advice regarding the precaution against the Dark Enemy, he describes himself as “[...] Saruman the Wise, Saruman Ring-maker, Saruman of Many Colours” while referring to the another wise wizard, Radagast, as a “fool.”⁸² He has a strong obsession with ruling power as can be understood from his own utterance. “The time of Elves is over, but our time is at hand: the world of men which we must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, [...]”⁸³ Saruman symbolically serves the evil and detrimental purposes of industrial agents in relation to the environment by adopting the belief in the hierarchically constructed universe.

⁸¹ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 825.

⁸² Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 337.

⁸³ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 337.

We may join with that Power. It would be wise, Gandalf. There is hope that way. Its victory is at hand; and there will be rich reward for those that aided it. As the Power grows, its proved friends will also grow; and the Wise, such as you and I, may with patience come at last to direct its courses, to control it. We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring may be evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak and idle friends.⁸⁴

The same “ultimate purpose” to know, rule, and control all the natural elements was established by Bacon and Descartes during the Age of Enlightenment and the scientific revolution. This led humans to separate themselves from the rest of the universe and place themselves in a higher position as distant observers, possessors, and dominators.

This is also symbolically reflected in the trilogy with the towers of Barad-dûr and Orthanc, built in Mordor and Isengard. These places are located very high above the ground, which reflects Sauron and Saruman as the supreme powers. Like humans, they detach themselves to observe and gain the knowledge of the universe through these two towers. The towers also demonstrate the broken ties between the characters and the land. In Mordor and Isengard, high industrial buildings are erected while in the Shire and Elven lands, characters adapt their way of living to the land, and instead of building “armoury” towers, they construct their own houses in harmony with nature. Their living places are not vertically designed, but perfectly coexist with and fit into the land. There exists this undeniable connection between the dead nature and the malevolent and wicked soul of the characters in Mordor and Isengard and similarly, sanity and peace of mind can only be achieved by bringing oneself in connection with the natural environment. Roszak states that technoindustrial cities are always the projection of our uneasy soul and the source of madness as Mordor and Isengard reflect their devastating effects on the psyche through evil characters. William M.R. Simpson emphasizes how it is important to protect ourselves from Saruman’s mechanization in science and industry.

[...] we hobbits would do well to heed the voice of Gandalf and think again about the integrity of natural things, and about which road will lead us back to the Shire. For we, who have broken the world to find out what it is, have left the path of wisdom.⁸⁵

In *The Two Towers*, Tolkien compares the old peaceful days of Isengard with the ruin after the assault of Ents. He points out that behind the evil appearance of Isengard, there lies the greed of Saruman.

A strong place and wonderful was Isengard, and long it had been beautiful; and there great lords had dwelt, the wardens of Gondor upon the West, and wise men that watched the stars. But Saruman had slowly shaped it to his shifting purposes, and made it better, as he thought, being deceived – for all those art and subtle devices for which he forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor; so that what he made was naught, only a little copy, a child’s model or a slave’s flattery, of that vast fortress, armoury, prison, furnace of great power, Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower, which suffered no rival, and laughed at flattery, biding its time, secure in its pride, and its immeasurable strength.⁸⁶

This natural plain where the dwellers try to be close to natural elements has turned into a copy or imitation of another dark place, Mordor. It has lost its essence, wisdom, and beauty. In order to reach his ultimate aims, Saruman destroys the natural environment, builds working areas very much like factories, and uses blacksmithing, mining, and logging. He totally ruins the green setting of Isengard. Worse than these, he car-

⁸⁴ Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 338.

⁸⁵ William M.R. Simpson, “The Science of Saruman: Nature, Structure and a Mind of Metal and Wheels,” *Journal of Inklings Studies* 5/2, (2015): 109.

⁸⁶ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 724.

ries out a monstrous project by generating a new kind of species, Uruk-hai, from of man and orcs. He breeds a secluded race that is unnatural to Middle-Earth, which results in his estrangement from his true self. Gandalf describes Saruman as “ignorant” “weary[ing his] ears.”⁸⁷ A wise man has turned into a simple-minded character. When the land has lost its natural beauty, so has the dweller.

Conclusion

Ecopsychology, with its strong emphasis on the interrelatedness between psychic sanity and the health of the cosmos, finds its remarkable reflections in the trilogy. Several ecopsychologists such as Roszak, Aizensat, Greenway, and Metzner have asserted that the communication between humans and the natural world is both physical and psychological. That is why, every change in the outer world echoes in the inner world and vice versa. To cure the disordered mind of the people of the Anthropocene within greenless cities, ecopsychology foregrounds the significance of finding our ancient genetic codes which can connect us back to nature and help us reach the “ecological unconscious” and “world unconscious”. Tolkien’s masterpiece introduces such societies as Elves and Hobbits to highlight how tranquillity in the soul is possible with respectful and interdependent togetherness among all entities in nature. Elven lands reflect the romantic dimension of the human-nature connection. On the other hand, the Shire can be characterized by the image of a natural home. Nature is portrayed as a self-sustainable and self-assertive character whose capacity for subjectivity, self-care, and free will is manifest throughout the story. Its identity is not constructed as an otherized, victimized, and suppressed entity. On the contrary, Tolkien skilfully depicts the outcomes of violence against nature and other species with Mordor and Isengard. The darkness, machinery, aridness, infertility, and naturelessness of these two geographies are reflected through the mental states of their dwellers who are totally the opposite of Elves and Hobbits. Their minds and souls are devastated to such an extent that they become restless, listless and apprehensive. They are the representations of humans’ chaotic and distressed inner world in the Anthropocene. By creating two sharply different atmospheres, Tolkien provides a very effective showcase for ecopsychological understanding. Our article has concentrated on the physical and mental wellbeing of the fictional characters, which closely depends on the meaningful immersion in the natural environment. We have also tried to underline and analyse the subjectivity of nature with its strong capacity to respond, which challenges the conceptualization of nature as an inert and passive matter, and a subordinated victim to be acted upon. The text offers rich and diverse materials to explore nature from different perspectives for further studies.

⁸⁷ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 338.

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