

Subcreation as Synthesis of Language and Myth:
The Power and Purpose of Names and Naming in Tolkien's *The Children of Húrin*

Stephanie Ricker
Campbell University

Faculty Mentor:
Frank Vaughan, PhD
English Department
Campbell University

The Children of Húrin can be considered the genesis as well as the culmination of all of J.R.R. Tolkien's works. While *The Children of Húrin* is among the most recently published of Tolkien's writings, the various texts drawn together to form this tale are among his earliest written. The tale epitomizes the synthesis of ideas that Tolkien strove to express in the vast body of his mythopoeic literature. With his extensive knowledge of linguistics, mythology, and religion, Tolkien was well aware of the implications and the power behind names and naming. In *The Children of Húrin*, he utilizes archetypal principles of naming drawn from a variety of sources, and he uses the biblical Old Testament concepts of naming and the power of names themselves, forging the story into one of great mythological and linguistic significance by tying it to these religious traditions. In so doing, this story as myth becomes a form of subcreation, brought into being by the power inherent within the names of the characters in the myth.

Tolkien's mythopoeic texts, including *The Children of Húrin*, were written initially from a linguistic background; thus an analysis of these texts first requires an understanding of language, myth, and the interconnectivity between these two. For the purposes of this analysis, mythology is defined as creative narrative which expresses a deep, universal truth; myth is fundamentally true, even if the literal events in it never happened. Quoted in Cassirer's *Language and Myth*, Max Müller states, "Mythology is inevitable, it is natural, it is an inherent necessity of language, if we recognize in language the outward form and manifestation of thought; it is in fact the dark shadow which language throws upon thought, and which can never disappear till language becomes entirely commensurate with thought, which it never will" (5).

For Müller, mythology is the natural outcome of language, which is itself insufficient to express thought. However, mythology is not subordinate to language; on the contrary, it is “the power exercised by language on thought in every possible sphere of mental activity” (qtd. in Cassirer 5). Cassirer cements the connections between thought, language, and myth. He believes that both language and myth emanate from the same point, from “metaphorical *thinking*; the nature and meaning of metaphor is what we must start with if we want to find, on the one hand, the unity of the verbal and mythical worlds, and, on the other, their difference” (84). The culmination of metaphorical thinking is naming: an object is called by a word, and the word equals the object. Thus the power of metaphorical thinking is the power of both myth and language, and both myth and language rely on this metaphorical thinking in naming.

Tolkien’s approach to the connection between myth and language is balanced by his love for both of these concepts. As a philologist, he was fascinated not only by language, words, and their origins, but also by their effect in the past, as demonstrated by his love of history and his attempt to create a mythic history in such works as *The Children of Húrin*. His

unparalleled mastery of ancient tongues convinced him that words are rooted in reality because speech arises out of experience...For him, language and myth were inextricably linked and equally valid. Against the reductionist view that “language is a disease of mythology,” therefore, Tolkien argued that in myth lies the real origin and continuing power of language. (Wood 33)

Tolkien’s mythopoeic works illustrate this equal and vitalizing bond between language and myth. Language is the paintbrush Tolkien uses to create his myth. It is a powerful tool, and “for Tolkien, language is never neutral. As our most precious gift, it is always loaded with implication, always employed for either good or ill” (Wood 36). In mythology, the most important part of language is the name, whether of a god or a person or a thing, as is shown in *The Children of Húrin*. In studying myth written by Tolkien, one must bear in mind “that for a medieval philologist the natural confluence of history, language, and personal thinking comes at the point of *name*” (Jeffrey 107). Jeffrey further argues that, from this perspective, language becomes the mediator of mankind’s view of history and that “the very closest and most faithful mediation of language” is “made possible by the meaning of *names*” (111). Names are the links in the chain binding language and myth together, the most vital part of the connection between the two.

While Tolkien was undeniably in love with mythology and history, he viewed these things through the lens of Christianity. Though Tolkien's Christianity is not explicit in his works, the strong moral undercurrent and underlying themes of his stories lend a decidedly Christian flavor to his created mythology. For Tolkien, naming in mythology does not carry the same weight as naming in the religious tradition; mythology can never be more true or more important than the true Myth, that of the Bible. Thus, in Tolkien's view, naming in mythology is a reflection of biblical naming. Tolkien's created myths fall into the same category, as *The Silmarillion* and related texts mirror naming principles specifically from the Old Testament to which they are closest in tone and scope. (The New Testament, while containing ample naming principles as well, opens up different concepts of naming which are beyond the scope of this analysis.) To understand the reflection (naming in *The Children of Húrin*), one must first understand what Tolkien saw as the original image (naming in the Old Testament).

To begin quite literally at the beginning, naming in the Old Testament is first introduced in terms of creation. In Genesis 1, as God creates the world, He "[calls] the light Day, and the darkness He call[s] night" (The New King James Version, Gen. 1:5). He names Heaven, Earth, and the Seas as He creates, equating the power of creation with the power of naming (Gen. 1:8, 10). In this instance, the word translated "called" literally means in the Hebrew "to call out," calling something or someone by its proper name (Strong's #7121). God, by knowing the name of the thing to be created, actually calls the thing into being. This concept of naming is shared by both religion and mythology, and in both the Word "becomes a sort of primary force, in which all being and doing originate. In all mythical cosmogonies, as far back as they can be traced, this supreme position of the Word is found" (Cassirer 45). Cassirer argues that "in the creation accounts of almost all great cultural religions, the Word appears in league with the highest Lord of creation... Thought and its verbal utterance are usually taken directly as one; for the mind that thinks and the tongue that speaks belong essentially together" (45-46). Therefore, creation through naming is a part of metaphoric thought, the connection between language and myth.

With this perspective, God's creation of thinking, speaking man takes on new significance, for the newly-created man is also a namer. According to the biblical account, one of the first things God does after creating Adam is to bring all of the animals before him "to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So

Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field” (Gen. 2:19-20). In these verses, the Hebrew word translated “name” means “an appellation, as a mark or memorial of individuality; by impl. honor, authority, character” (Strong’s #8034). God allowed Adam to participate in subcreation, mankind’s creative action within the larger creation of God, as Adam was given authority to call the animals by their proper name for the first time. Cassirer argues that by “this act of appellation, man takes possession of the world both physically and intellectually – subjects it to his knowledge and his rule” (83). The concept of the namer having power over the named is one that appears throughout mythology and Tolkien’s works. However, far from being merely an exercise in power over another, “naming introduces distinction into chaos. ... On this principle, Adam names animals to define the world of creatures; Elohim (Genesis 1) designates the irreducible elements (day/night) of creation. ... Nomenclature establishes the place of the named, its right relationship to all about it” (Halpern 627). Naming thus becomes a form of moral order, a way to establish the true place of a thing within the universe.

The power of subcreation, the gift given to us by God to expand upon his creation, is the driving force behind Tolkien’s works as mythology. Wood states, “As Tolkien reiterates endlessly, we ourselves are makers because we have been made” (13). Tolkien desired to use his subcreative ability to make a new mythology, one that he thought his country lacked. In a letter he states, “I had in mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story – the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths” (qtd. in Wood 19). While Tolkien called this dream “absurd,” feeling that he could never achieve such a creation, many would argue that he has indeed done so (Wood 19). Jeffrey posits that naming is the vehicle which has allowed this to come to pass, for “in the making of his subcreation and in the response it evokes, Tolkien invites us to see subcreation in Adam’s terms, as naming” (115). For Tolkien, naming is the root of all creation; “names [are] also a source of inspiration and [provide] creative impulse” (Lee and Solopova 50). The name is the spark of all that is to come, as Tolkien explained in one of his letters: “To me a name comes first and the story follows” (qtd. in Lee and Solopova 50).

One of the building blocks of this foundation of naming is the idea that the name of a thing and the essence of a thing are entwined. Cassirer argues that this concept is connected to

the creation of myths: “the notion that name and essence bear a necessary and internal relation to each other, that the name does not merely denote but actually *is* the essence of the object, that the potency of the real thing is contained in the name – that is one of the fundamental associations of the mythmaking consciousness itself” (3). This concept is consistent with Adamic naming, as the name defines and imposes order and thus is closely linked to its referent. In mythology, the link is strengthened nearly to the point of the name becoming inseparable from the referent, as “even a person’s ego, his very self and personality, is indissolubly linked, in mythic thinking, with his name” (Cassirer 49-50). The person literally *is* his own name. The name may become “an integral part of its bearer... As such it is in the same category as his body or soul. It is said of the Eskimos that for them man consists of three elements – body, soul, and name. ...And of all these three elements it is just the last-mentioned which becomes more and more the expression of a man’s ‘self,’ of his ‘personality’” (Cassirer 50). In other words, a person’s individuality and personal expression are also embodied by the name, the one aspect of being that the person has the ability to create.

This idea is ubiquitous throughout nearly all mythologies and many cultural beliefs as well. In his analysis of the origins of mythology in relatively undeveloped cultures, Frazer states, “Unable to discriminate clearly between words and things, the savage commonly fancies that the link between a name and the person or thing denominated by it is not a mere arbitrary and ideal association, but a real and substantial bond which unites the two” (284). While Frazer misunderstands the deeper purposes behind mythology and considers such concepts of naming to be beneath the civilized individual, his observation is valid as it relates to the cultures he studied. Cassirer comments that

[e]ven in far more advanced cultures this connection between name and personality continues to be felt. When, in Roman Law, the concept of the “legal person” was formally articulated, and this status was denied to certain physical subjects, those subjects were also denied official possession of a proper name. Under Roman law a slave had no legal name, because he could not function as a legal person. (50-51)

Possessing a name is vital to one’s freedom and individuality; in this context, the nameless are less than people, as they are missing an essential part of their being.

The idea of a name being, at the very least, a personal possession and at the most the very essence of one's being, means that the name of an individual must be protected at all times. If indeed "the name is what first makes man an individual," then no less than the individuality of the person is at stake if the name were to be misused (Cassirer 50). Frazer's analysis shows that many tribal peoples believe that an individual could be harmed if someone with evil intent gained the knowledge of his name. Nicknames become a way to fend off those who would do harm to a person's true name, as "these secondary names are apparently held to be no part of the man himself, so that they may be freely used and divulged to everybody without endangering his safety thereby" (Frazer 288). On the other side of the spectrum, loved ones remembering the name of an individual preserve that individual even after death because "the being and life of a person is so intimately connected with his name that, as long as the name is preserved and spoken, its bearer is still felt to be present and directly active. The dead may, at any moment, be literally 'invoked,' the moment those who survive him speak his name" (Cassirer 52). This knowledge of another's name grants the deceased a measure of immortality; if the name survives in memory, so also does a portion of the person.

The power of names in mythology as illustrated by these concepts is also present in the Bible, and Tolkien's mythology draws heavily from both mythological and biblical sources to form a cohesive principle of naming. Dietrich, quoted in Cassirer's *Language and Myth*, states:

The fact that the name functions as proxy for its bearer... that a name is feared because it is a real power; that knowledge of it is sought because being able to speak it bestows control of that power on the knower – all these facts indicate clearly what the early Christians were still feeling and trying to express when they said "In God's name" instead of "in God," or "In Christ's name" for "In Christ." (53-54)

Mary Zimmer expands upon this idea in her analysis of "word magic" and "name magic" in Tolkien's works: Middle-earth is subject to the same "conclusion advanced by Cassirer with regard to this earth, primarily that 'all word magic and name magic is based on the assumption that the world of things and the world of names form a single undifferentiated chain of causality and hence a single reality'" (50). This harkens back to Adamic naming and its establishment of the correct order of being. The single reality is uncovered by knowing the true name of the object or person.

The concept of the “right” or “true” name is a vital one to Tolkien’s works in light of biblical and mythological understanding of naming. Zimmer goes so far as to say that “the true name is to human language what the divine idea is to the Word: both the true name and the divine idea express the intelligible form of the thing whose name or idea it is” (53). It then becomes exceedingly important to give a person, particularly a child, the right, true name because the name establishes his or her place in the order of the world. All other considerations of naming must bow before this one. This belief is extant in Middle-earth, for “the fact that naming by ‘true names’ is common in Middle-earth is clear not only by the number of instances of such naming, but also by the characters’ attitudes towards the practice” (Zimmer 55). In *The Lord of the Rings*, “Gandalf expresses the ancient belief that the relationship between names and what they signify ought to be one of ‘right reasoning’ rather than ‘idle fancy.’ The relationship between a word and its referent is based on ‘right reasoning’ if one is able to reason from the word to that which it denotes” (Zimmer 55). The giving of the true name illustrates wisdom on the part of the namer, establishing the position of the thing to be named.

This true name is of such importance to the inhabitants of Middle-earth that they will go to great lengths to protect it and keep it sacred; it is the true expression of who they are. The true names of Dwarves and Elves are in their own languages and are kept secret. Dwarves never reveal their true names to anyone of a different race and, according to Zimmer, do not even record their true names on their tombs (56). As in the mythologies noted earlier, the inhabitants of Tolkien’s world practice “two forms of ‘name magic’: the tabooing of proper names and the changing of a person’s name to signify a substantial change in the person” (Zimmer 50). The Dwarves hide their names, for in order “to protect oneself from the effects of magic, one must protect one’s true name, preventing its use and employing false names instead” (Zimmer 56). As in myth, names in Tolkien’s world must change as the person changes. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the names of the Ents “‘tell you the story of the things they belong to’ (*LR* 3.4, 454). Because these names intelligibly resemble the things they denote, as those things grow and change, so too do their names” (Zimmer 56). Renaming “is the taking on of a new name to signify a change in being,” as will be clearly shown with the names in *The Children of Húrin* (Zimmer 57). This takes the concept back to that of biblical naming, where renaming “implies a new or renewed conformity of essence with nomenclature, a return to the magical precision of divine or Adamic

language” (Halpern 627). The name may be changed to better reflect the person’s place in the order of the world.

If creation, and certainly subcreation, proceed through naming, then the lack of a name becomes a sort of uncreation, a destruction of the unnamed thing. The name of the mouth of Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings* “is remembered in no story” and he himself has forgotten it, an example of the ultimate “loss of being concomitant with a loss in name” as he now has no individual identity (Zimmer 58). He is “absent from the divine mind,” having become the product of uncreation rather than creation (Zimmer 58). With this concept in mind, “it is not surprising, then, that Sauron is referred to as the ‘Nameless Enemy’ (LR 2.2, 239); banished from the divine mind, evil things become nameless” (Zimmer 58). By not speaking his name aloud, the inhabitants of Middle-earth relegate him to an uncreated thing, diminishing his power. If “the practice of naming and renaming continually reaffirms the existence of the good, and in that sense, continually re-creates it,” then not naming evil is a defense against it, “for to name is to create” (Crabbe 160). Naming, inherently powerful, easily becomes dangerous if right reason is not exercised.

Tolkien’s works encompass these mythological and biblical principles of naming and combine them to form a synthesis of the conceptual power of names. The many names in Tolkien’s cohesive body of work (there are over 800 names listed in the index to *The Silmarillion* alone) “foster the essential verisimilitude by grounding the story firmly in a geographical and cultural context” (Turner 32). The depth behind them allows Tolkien to use “names as witnesses to the history and customs of different lands, races and peoples: names give evidence of ethnic and family origin of characters, position in society and personal qualities. Most names invented by Tolkien are meaningful and motivated by what is known about their owners” (Lee and Solopova 50). In older mythologies, “names were words of ordinary vocabulary and had the same relationship with their referents as any other words: their function was to describe a person or an object” (Lee and Solopova 50). Just as “names found in Old English poetry are usually meaningful and reflect the personality of the bearers,” so too are Tolkien’s names (Lee and Solopova 51). *The Children of Húrin*, a tale reconstructed from various finished and unfinished Tolkien texts, is the culmination of Tolkien’s principles of naming. Tolkien wrote it as a true legend, following the principles of naming present in

mythology, not out of an attempt to turn a carefully crafted story into a pseudo-myth, but instead as the natural outcome of a story that contained within it all the power of a genuine mythology.

The story of Túrin can be seen as the beginning of Tolkien's creation of Middle-earth; he began it before he began any of his other, more famous works. Tolkien found inspiration for the story of Túrin in the *Kalevala*, a book of Finnish mythology he read while a soldier in World War I. As early as 1914, he wrote to his future wife on the subject of the *Kalevala*, stating that "Amongst other work I am trying to turn one of the stories – which is really a very great story and most tragic – into a short story somewhat on the lines of [William] Morris's romances with chunks of poetry in between" (*Letters* 7). Fifty years later, Tolkien wrote to Christopher Bretherton that "the germ of my attempt to write legends of my own to fit my private languages was the tragic tale of the hapless Kullervo in the Finnish *Kalevala*" (*Letters* 345). The Finnish influence on names can be seen in the original draft notes for the poem that he composed that would later become *The Children of Húrin*. Tiranne, Vainoni, and Kuruki, all names that are Finnish in sound and meaning, would later become Morwen, Niënor, and Glaurung, names constructed from Tolkien's languages as his mythology developed (*Lost Tales* 138).

To understand the importance of names in *The Children of Húrin*, some background information is required on the names themselves within the created, mythological world of Middle-earth. The names in the tale are primarily derived from Tolkien's Elvish languages, but some also draw from Old English. The Elves "and others who took names in the Elvish languages, customarily used several different kinds of names" (Salo 339). The first of these was the "Father-name, a name chosen for the child at birth by his or her father and whose owner could not alter it. It often resembled the father's name" (Salo 339). The second was the "Chosen Name, a name chosen (usually newly invented) by a child at about the age of ten, expressing his or her own preferences in the language. Other chosen names might be added later in life" (Salo 339). After these, a variety of given or added names might be used, such as the "Mother-name... a special name given by a mother to her child, often expressing a special insight into the child's nature or foresight of its fate," or nicknames, "names by which a person was commonly known, but not his or her true name," including "names given by others, like *Mormegil Blacksword*," and "names of personal choice... chosen by a person either as a disguise or in reference to his or her own history" (Salo 339). The vast array of names within *The Children of Húrin* alone

necessitates that this analysis limit itself to these types of personal names, excluding place and object names.

The first personal name of significance within the tale is that of Húrin, Túrin's father, and Húrin's names give insight into his character and show how his influence will be felt throughout the story. Húrin is a powerful warrior of Dor-lómin, a land often plagued by Morgoth's evil forces. He and other Men go with the Elves to war against Morgoth in an attempt to defeat him. The battle is an utter disaster: Húrin manages to survive, but he is captured by Morgoth. In Sindarin Elvish, Húrin (Úrin in the earliest manuscripts) means "mind of vigor," and this name describes his character exactly (Salo 353). Though Húrin is captured, he will not bend to Morgoth's will; and he never gives in throughout the long years of his captivity. He is a lord of the House of Hador, a noble race of Men, and is sometimes called Hadorion ("son of Hador") as one of his nicknames. He is often referred to as Húrin the Steadfast, Thalion or Erithámrod in the Elvish tongue. "Thalion" is a Sindarin word translated "strong, steadfast, dauntless," a "hero, dauntless man," and such is Húrin, who does not allow himself to be daunted by Morgoth, a being immeasurably more powerful than he is (Salo 358). He rejects Morgoth's offer to become one of his captains, and he refuses to give Morgoth the information he seeks, though Morgoth promises to free Húrin if he will do so. Living up to his name, "Húrin the Steadfast [mocks] him, saying: 'Blind you are, Morgoth Bauglir, and blind shall ever be, seeing only the dark. You know not what rules the hearts of Men, and if you knew you could not give it. But a fool is he who accepts what Morgoth offers'" (*Húrin* 62-63). By remaining true to the meaning of his name, Húrin sets a standard of bravery and hope for his son to emulate later. Heroism and the power of his name become tools to overcome Morgoth.

Unfortunately, Húrin's actions, however brave, do not negate Morgoth's power. Morgoth vows, "Yet I may come at you, and all your accursed house; and you shall be broken on my will, though you all were made of steel" (*Húrin* 63). In *The Lost Tales* version, Morgoth tells Húrin that "the life of Túrin thy son shall be accounted a matter for tears wherever Elves or Men are gathered for the telling of tales" (*Lost Tales* 71). Húrin does not quail before such a curse, and he speaks some of the most important words in the tale when he answers Morgoth: "You speak in vain. For you cannot see them, nor govern them from afar" (*Húrin* 63). Húrin retains his hope and his belief in free will, even in the face of Morgoth's curse. He holds to his right name, Steadfast, and refuses to doubt. At the same time, he believes that heroism can alter the

course of events, and when Melko (Morgoth) curses his son in *The Lost Tales* version, Úrin (Húrin) answers, “At least none shall pity him for this, that he had a craven for a father” (*Lost Tales* 71). Thus Húrin speaks the doctrine of indomitable will that Tolkien analyzes in his scholarship of Old English poetry: the idea of persevering in the face of inevitable defeat as the true definition of heroism.

Húrin is physically defeated but refuses to acknowledge it; he still retains his inner freedom. Though Morgoth can kill or torture him, he cannot break his spirit. Morgoth expands upon the curse he has placed on Húrin’s family as he claims that all will eventually bend to his will: “upon all whom you love my thought shall weigh as a cloud of Doom, and it shall bring them down into darkness and despair. Wherever they go, evil shall arise. Whenever they speak, their words shall bring ill counsel. Whatsoever they do shall turn against them. They shall die without hope, cursing both life and death” (*Húrin* 64). He condemns Húrin to see all that Morgoth sees and to hear all that Morgoth hears, forcing him to watch helplessly from Morgoth’s perspective all that occurs in the world. Nevertheless, Húrin clings to the philosophy of his name, believing that “*Aurë entuluva!* Day shall come again!” (*Húrin* 59-60). Thus, through the power of name, Húrin becomes the heroic ideal in this myth.

Húrin’s deeds in life had won a name for him; his defiance in what he thought was his death made him truly heroic, a *thalion*. Had his son followed in his footsteps in belief as well as in mighty deeds, Túrin’s life might have been a happier one. As a young boy, he is told that he possesses the seed of his father’s greatness: “‘For though you are yet small you have the makings of a valiant man, worthy to be a son of Húrin the Steadfast, if that were possible.’ For the name of Húrin was held in honor in all the lands of the Elves” (*Húrin* 76). Túrin feels a fierce love and admiration for both of his parents and defends their names, particularly that of his father. He shows that he understands his father’s philosophy, defending his father’s hopeless fight against Morgoth when he says, “The defiance of Húrin Thalion is a great deed; and though Morgoth slay the doer he cannot make the deed not to have been. Even the Lords of the West will honor it; and is it not written into the history of Arda, which neither Morgoth nor Manwë can unwrite?” (*Húrin* 161). Túrin recognizes within himself the ability to emulate his father’s decision to make the honorable decision in the face of his own death.

Húrin placed a name upon his son that gave him the power to do what was right. Húrin bestowed on his son the name of Túrin, his Father-name and his true, right name. Túrin means

“having a mind (suitable) for victory” and is remarkably similar to Húrin’s name in sound as well as meaning (Salo 358). Túrin son of Húrin is how he is named when he is most himself. Húrin calls him the Heir of the House of Hador, passing on his noble lineage (*Húrin* 45). Húrin is a light-hearted, hopeful man, while his wife Morwen, the mother of Túrin, is of a graver and prouder disposition. Morwen’s name (Mavwin or Mavoinë in *The Lost Tales*) means “dark maiden,” so called for her dark hair, but perhaps for the dark, unyielding side of her character as well (Salo 356). She is also known as Eledhwen (“maiden like an Elf”) for her great, distant beauty (Salo 347). Together Húrin and Morwen would have balanced out one another’s influence; but with Húrin in captivity, Túrin only has his mother’s influence, one of pride and vengeance, though she loves her son deeply. She addresses him as “son of Morwen” instead of “son of Húrin” when urging him to seek revenge against Morgoth for his crimes against their family (*Húrin* 40). In so doing, she calls Túrin after her vengeful side rather than his father’s calmer personality.

The giving of Túrin’s rightful, true name establishes his place in the world, just as in biblical naming. The naming of children is an extremely important concept in terms of how the child will live his life because the name chosen by the parents expresses the child’s purpose. Sometimes the name of the child is an attempt to name the future and to shape it. Mirroring this concept, the name of Túrin expresses the purpose that Húrin hoped his son would achieve. In the Old Testament, the child’s name is often associated with important or emotionally-charged events happening near the child’s birth. While in Egypt, far from his kin, Joseph named his sons Manasseh (“Making Forgetful”) and Ephraim (“Fruitfulness”), saying, “God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house,” and “God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (Gen. 41:51-52). Túrin was also born during a dark time for Húrin and Morwen, but his name expresses the hope that he will surmount the challenges of his era. Clearly, names in mythological and biblical tradition, even when improperly given, still carry a good deal of power, as shown in the story of Jabez (“He Will Cause Pain”), so named because his mother “bore him in pain” (I Chron. 4:9). When he was older, “Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, ‘Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!’ So God granted him what he requested” (I Chron. 4:10). Jabez felt that his name was indicative of his fate, and he wished to change that fate. That he was successful with God’s help is significant, showing that

free will is not negated by one's name. This is an important concept to note; Tolkien's Christianity deeply impacts his writing, and finding the balance between fate (often connected to name) and free will is one of the central issues in *The Children of Húrin*.

One of the most significant incidences of naming in *The Children of Húrin* is that of Túrin's younger sister. She is named Urwen at birth, meaning "maiden of heat" (Salo 359); however, she is called Lalaith, meaning "laughter," by all who know her (*Húrin* 34). So merry is she that the spring near her home is known as Nen Lalaith, the spring of laughter (*Unfinished Tales* 58). Both Túrin and Lalaith fall ill when a plague, sent by Morgoth, sweeps the land. Urwen dies, but Túrin recovers. When he asks after Lalaith, his nurse tells him, "Speak no more of Lalaith, son of Húrin; but of your sister Urwen you must ask tidings from your mother," showing the difference in significance of the two names the child had been called (*Húrin* 40). Túrin asks his mother about Urwen and why he must "not say Lalaith any more" (*Húrin* 40). Morwen replies, "Because Urwen is dead, and laughter is stilled in this house" (*Húrin* 40). The death of the bearer of the name brings about the death of the named characteristic, both literally and figuratively. In her grief, Morwen gives no comfort to her son, who "[weeps] bitterly at night alone, though to Morwen he never again [speaks] the name of his sister" (*Húrin* 40). The power of this disappearance of Lalaith from Túrin's life cannot be underestimated: after her death, laughter is stilled; the name and the named disappear. Morwen did wrong to banish the name of her daughter; destroying or forgetting a name is always a terrible fate in biblical and mythological naming. In her sorrow, Morwen cannot bear to hear the name of her child spoken and thus does not preserve the name, yet in so doing she harms both her deceased daughter's memory and also her living son. Forever afterwards, Túrin seeks "in all faces of women the face of Lalaith," a search that would come to haunt him (*Unfinished Tales* 147, note 7).

After Lalaith's death, Túrin's only friend is Sador, a crippled vassal of Húrin. He brings a touch of kindness to Túrin's life, and Túrin in turn names him, calling "him Labadal, which is 'Hopafoot,' though the name [does] not displease Sador, for it [is] given in pity and not in scorn" (*Húrin* 41). This marks the first of Túrin's naming of others, and it is a point in his favor that the name is given in love. As with the difference between Urwen and Lalaith, so is the difference between Sador and Labadal; the names almost seem to reflect different people. One denotes the vassal who has pledged to do his duty by his lord, and the other denotes the friend of a young boy. When Túrin is preparing to leave home to escape the predations of invaders, Sador tells

him, “Labadal does not want you to go; but Sador servant of Húrin will be happier when Húrin’s son is out of the reach of the Easterlings” (*Húrin* 74). The change in name refers to two different sides of Sador’s personality.

The hardness of Túrin’s character, a quality that will shape his fate, is forged early in his young life. One day when Túrin asks Sador why Men fled here from over the Mountains, Sador is unable to give account of their coming, for “even their names are forgotten” (*Húrin* 43). He tells Túrin, “‘It may be that we fled from the fear of the Dark, only to find it here before us, and nowhere else to fly but the Sea.’ ‘We are not afraid any longer,’ said Túrin, ‘not all of us. My father is not afraid, and I will not be; or at least, as my mother, I will be afraid and not show it’” (*Húrin* 43). With that, “it seemed then to Sador that Túrin’s eyes were not the eyes of a child, and he thought: ‘Grief is a hone to a hard mind’” (*Húrin* 43). Early on, Túrin equates fear with namelessness and those of weak will, viewing these qualities with contempt. He knows himself to be brave, and he becomes prideful in this knowledge, thinking it alone will be enough to overcome anything he might face.

The hardening of Túrin’s character becomes clearer when he is forced to flee his home. In her pride, Morwen is reluctant to ask the Elves of the hidden kingdom of Gondolin for help, as her husband had advised her to do before his capture. Finally, however, she sees no other way to keep her son from thralldom. She herself refuses to go, being close to delivering her next child and not wishing to lower herself before King Thingol, ruler of Gondolin. Túrin leaves his mother, but “this [is] the first of the sorrows of Túrin” that will harden him (*Húrin* 75). Thingol and his wife Melian hospitably send word to Morwen to join her son, but she still refuses; and “Melian [is] moved with pity, perceiving [Morwen’s] mind; and she [sees] that the fate which she foreboded could not lightly be set aside” (*Húrin* 78). This becomes “the second sorrow of Túrin,” and the example of his mother’s pride and unbending will is one that would affect the rest of his life, as Melian, with powers of her own, foresaw and tried to avert through kindness (*Húrin* 78).

As soon as he is old enough, Túrin goes forth with the Elves in skirmishes and battles against Orcs, earning himself a reputation as a warrior and preferring the wilds and a life of battle to the gentle halls of Thingol and Melian. He wears the famous Helm of Hador, a Dragon-helm passed down from his father’s line; so fiercely does he defend the lands surrounding Gondolin that Orcs shun that region and flee at the very sight of the helm. He becomes known as

Gorthol, the Dread Helm; and “one only [is] mightier in arms among the march-wardens of Thingol at that time than Túrin, and that [is] Beleg Strongbow,” Túrin’s best friend among the Elves (*Húrin* 86). “Beleg and Túrin [are] companions in every peril, and [walk] far and wide in the wild woods together” (*Húrin* 86). Many saw in Túrin the characteristics of his father, as “word [runs] through the woods” that “the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin was seen again,” “saying: ‘Can the spirit of any man return from death; or has Húrin of Hithlum escaped indeed from the pits of Hell?’” (*Húrin* 85-86). By taking on the helm of his father and gaining his first nickname by it, Túrin links his name to that of Húrin. He becomes a fearsome warrior, yet he has little of his Húrin’s lightness of heart or eternal, unquenchable hope, and his bonds with the peaceful things of this earth are being dissolved.

When Túrin returns to Gondolin from campaigning in the wilds, an incident occurs that marks the beginning of his renaming of himself, as well as one of the first steps towards the fate which is linked to his name. Though Túrin is well-liked by most, Saeros, the counselor to the king, is contemptuous of him and sees his position as a foster-son of Thingol as a dishonor to Thingol and to the Elves. In the earlier versions, Saeros’ name is Orgof or Orgol, related to the Old English word *orgol* or *orgel* meaning pride, the characteristic that will later become, quite literally, the bane of Túrin (*Húrin* 95). Saeros taunts Túrin and makes the mistake of insulting Morwen. In a rage, Túrin throws his drinking cup at Saeros. Depending upon the version of the story, Saeros is either grievously hurt or accidentally killed by the force of the blow. In *The Children of Húrin*, Saeros, only wounded, cries, “How long shall we harbour this woodwose? Who rules here tonight? The King’s law is heavy upon those who hurt his lieges in the hall; and for those who draw blades there outlawry is the least doom. Outside the hall I could answer you, Woodwose!” (78).

Thus Túrin is given his second nickname, a word derived from the Old English word *was*a meaning a forlorn or abandoned person, similar to “orphan” in German and Dutch (*weise* and *wees*) (*Guide* 175). In a way, this name fits Túrin, as he is all but orphaned. In the finale version, he is later attacked by Saeros in the woods; when he retaliates, Saeros flees in fear and is accidentally killed as he attempts to leap across a ravine. Túrin is greatly saddened by Saeros’ death but refuses to defend himself to those who find Saeros’ body; in his pride, he is offended that it even occurs to Thingol that he killed Saeros intentionally or that the King might dare to pass judgment on him for the crime, and he tells no one that Saeros first tried to kill him.

Thingol's men try to convince Túrin to return and seek justice and the King's favor, but Túrin refuses and flees into the wild, convinced the King will attempt to capture him.

Túrin will not return to be judged because of his pride; yet if he had done so, his judgment would have been light. Thingol opens court on Túrin's case, hearing all the information "before [he] [speaks] [his] doom" (*Húrin* 92). The importance of doom or fate in *The Children of Húrin* cannot be overemphasized; Túrin sees it as an implacable force set in motion by Morgoth, seeking his ruin, but Thingol sees the idea of doom as justice. Had Túrin returned to seek that justice, all would have yet been well. Instead his pride leads him astray into the very curse that he seeks to avoid. The Elves who witnessed the event tell Thingol the true story. Though Thingol believes that Túrin's actions show "a heart hard and proud," he gives him a fair doom; he proclaims, "Such fault as can be found in Túrin I now pardon, holding him wronged and provoked. . . . he shall not seek for this pardon, but I will send it to him, wherever he may be found; and I will recall him in honour to my halls" (*Húrin* 93, 95). Messengers are sent to find Túrin and give him this pardon, but he remains hidden, though his friend Beleg continues to search for him tirelessly.

Here Túrin renames himself for the first of many times. He falls in with a band of outlaws roaming the woods. When asked his name, he replies, "Neithan, the Wronged, I call myself . . . and Neithan he was afterwards called by the outlaws; but though he claimed to have suffered injustice (and to any who claimed the like he ever lent too ready an ear), no more would he reveal concerning his life or his home" (*Húrin* 101). Túrin abides "long among the outlaws," becoming their captain (*Silmarillion* 239). A variant of the story in *The Unfinished Tales* posits that the knowledge that Neithan was really Túrin son of Húrin led those outlaws to accept him as leader of the band: Túrin cannot escape his true name. At last his friend Beleg Cúthalion (Beleg meaning "Mighty" and Cúthalion meaning "Strongbow," so named for his skill as an archer) finds him at his camp and tells him he has named himself wrongly: "Now at last I can tell my tidings. You are no outlaw, and Neithan is a name unfit. Such fault as was found in you is pardoned. For a year you have been sought, to recall you to honour and to the service of the King. The Dragon-helm has been missed too long" (*Húrin* 114). Yet Túrin's pride still will not allow him return to Thingol. Beleg calls Túrin a stubborn man and departs, leaving Túrin with the injunction, "If you wish indeed to have the Strongbow beside you, look for me in Dimbar" (*Húrin* 118). Beleg's strong loyalty and friendship to Túrin do not outweigh his feelings of duty

to his own people and repugnance at the outlaws Túrin leads. Interestingly, the name Cúthalion contains within it the same word, *thalion*, as in one of Húrin's names. Like Húrin, Beleg is steadfast in doing what is right. Túrin, however, will not give up his name Neithan, holding tightly to his grievances.

Name changing or renaming is an expression of a change in a person's life. Cassirer states that "the mythic consciousness does not see human personality as something fixed and unchanging, but conceives of every *phase* of a man's life as a new personality, a new self; and this metamorphosis is first of all made manifest in the changes which his name undergoes" (51). Renaming oneself is common in biblical naming as well, often the result of a traumatic or life-changing incident, as in Túrin's case. For instance, after the death of her sons, Naomi ("Pleasant") refuses to be called by that name any longer: "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara ["Bitter"], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me" (Ruth 1:20). She feels that her name is no longer an accurate representation of who she is, just as Túrin no longer feels that his name is representative of who he is.

During his time with the outlaws, Túrin hides himself from Morgoth under the guise of his new name; however, events are soon set in motion which reveal what Túrin would rather keep hidden. Though against his better judgment, Beleg returns, using his great skill to find Túrin in his hiding place at Amon Rúdh. Túrin is overjoyed to see his good friend again and regrets their previous unfriendly parting. Beleg brings with him the Dragon-helm and offers it and gifts from Melian and Thingol. Túrin kindly accepts the helm, but tells Beleg, "I will not receive gifts out of Doriath" (*Húrin* 140). In exasperation with Túrin's pride, Beleg retorts, "Then send back your sword and your arms...Send back also the teaching and fostering of your youth. And let your men, who (you say) have been faithful, die in the desert, to please your mood!" (*Húrin* 140). Túrin's ever-ready ire is aroused, but he humbles himself for the first time and answers, "I wonder, friend, that you deign to come back to such a churl. From you I will take whatever you give, even rebuke. Henceforward you shall counsel me in all ways, save the road to Doriath only" (*Húrin* 140). The two friends once more go to war against the forces of Morgoth as Beleg draws Túrin back to a nobler, more hopeful path: "Túrin [puts] on again the Helm of Hador; and far and wide in Beleriand the whisper went, under wood and over stream and through the passes of the hills, saying that the Helm and Bow that had fallen in Dimbar had

arisen again beyond hope” (*Silmarillion* 245). The region becomes known as Dor-Cúarthol, the Land of Bow and Helm, where Túrin at last is happy again for a brief time (*Silmarillion* 245).

The whisper of the Dragon-helm resurrects Túrin’s old name, and he can no longer hide from Morgoth’s curse. All across the land, “the fame of the deeds of the Two Captains [is] heard; and in Angband also they [are] known. Then Morgoth [laughs], for now by the Dragon-helm [is] Húrin’s son revealed to him again; and ere long Amon Rúdh [is] ringed with spies” (*Silmarillion* 246). The outlaws are betrayed by one in their midst, and the Orcs capture Túrin alive to take to Angband, leaving Beleg for dead. However, Beleg recovers from his wounds to hunt the Orcs who have taken Túrin. He comes across Gwindor, an Elf of Nargothrond who was captured in the great battle in which Húrin also fought and was captured. Gwindor had managed to escape his captivity; he helps Beleg sneak into the Orc camp and carry Túrin, unconscious from exhaustion and pain, from their camp.

Circumstance and Túrin’s own hasty actions, not the curse of Morgoth, are what makes this portion of the story tragic. Both Gwindor and Beleg, being in a weakened state, can carry Túrin only part of the distance away from the camp. Beleg draws his sword Anglachel (meaning “Iron of the Star of Flame,” given to him by Thingol) to cut Túrin’s bonds, and in so doing accidentally nicks Túrin’s foot in the darkness. When the pain wakes Túrin from his haze of exhaustion, he sees a figure bending over him with a naked blade. Leaping up, he seizes Anglachel and slays “Beleg Cúthalion thinking him a foe” (*Silmarillion* 248). Lightning flares, revealing to him his mistake, and Túrin is horror-stricken, for “thus ended Beleg Strongbow, truest of friends, greatest in skill of all that harboured in the woods of Beleriand in the Elder days, at the hand of him whom he most loved; and that grief was graven on the face of Túrin and never faded” (*Silmarillion* 249). Gwindor buries Beleg and leads Túrin, lost in darkness of sorrow, away towards Nargothrond, Gwindor’s home. Túrin is consumed by sorrow and self-loathing at the slaying of his friend; the death of Beleg Cúthalion is also the death of all hope of reconciliation with the Elves of Gondolin.

The grief of this event prompts Túrin to take up his next name. Gwindor travels with him to Eithel Ivrin, the Crystal Springs. Gwindor tries to pull Túrin from his grief by calling him by his true name and reminding him of his father’s steadfastness: “Awake, Túrin son of Húrin Thalion! On Ivrin’s lake is endless laughter. She is fed from crystal fountains unfailing, and guarded from defilement by Ulmo, Lord of Waters, who wrought her beauty in ancient days”

(*Silmarillion* 250). Perhaps the endless laughter Gwindor speaks of reminds Túrin of his long-dead sister Lalaith, or the purity of the springs drives the shadow from his mind, for he recovers. When the two reach Nargothrond and Gwindor begins to introduce Túrin, Túrin stops him, saying instead, “I am Agarwaen, the son of Úmarth (which is the Bloodstained, son of Ill-fate), a hunter in the woods.’ But though the Elves guessed that he took these names (not knowing other reasons), they questioned him no more” (*Húrin* 159-160). Agarwaen (Iarwaeth in earlier versions) now expresses Túrin’s true nature as he sees it, stained by the blood of his friend, but he also seeks to conceal his name to hide from his ill-fortune.

Túrin bears many new names in Nargothrond, each illustrating a different facet of his personality. He becomes known as Adanedhel, Elf-Man, for his Elven speech, a trait carried over from his days in Gondolin. This name also illustrates the dichotomy within Túrin’s character; though he is a Man, he has grown up with the Elves, a being caught between the two worlds. Though Túrin mourns for Beleg, he soon grows accustomed to living in Nargothrond and gains position and power in that city, befriending Orodreth the King. As he has work to do that he enjoys and as his life runs more smoothly, Túrin is “courteous to all, and less grim than of old, so that well nigh all hearts [turn] to him” (*Húrin* 164). Finduilas, a beautiful Elf maid who had been betrothed to Gwindor before he was captured, aids in the recovery of the two men; and she and Túrin become fast friends. Finduilas personifies the laughter and hope that has been gone from Túrin’s life for so long. Gwindor had “named her Faelivrin, which is the gleam of the sun on the pools of Ivrin,” the place where Túrin was healed of his shadow, and she brings light again into his life (*Silmarillion* 251). He refuses to divulge his true name, though he does tell her, “I had a sister, Lalaith, or so I named her; and of her you put me in mind”; and he says, “I would I had a sister so fair” (*Húrin* 164, 165). Finduilas rekindles a bit of happiness in Túrin’s life which has not been present since Lalaith’s death. Finduilas replies, “I would I had a brother so valiant. And I do not think that Agarwaen is your name, nor is it fit for you, Adanedhel. I call you Thurin, the Secret” (*Húrin* 165). Thus Finduilas, while also recognizing the mystery in his personality, gives Túrin yet another name, one more positive than Agarwaen and one very similar to his right name.

Túrin is startled that she has come so close to his true name, but tells her nothing, living up to his close-mouthed new title. Finduilas finds herself falling for Túrin against her will. Gwindor is sadly changed from his time in captivity, but nonetheless she will not renounce her

word to him, nor will she speak of her love to Túrin. Gwindor, knowing the truth about Túrin's identity and the calamity brought down on him by Morgoth and by himself at every turn, warns her against him: "A doom lies on him; a dark doom. Enter not into it! And if you will, your love shall betray you to bitterness and death. . . . Though he be indeed *agarwaen* son of *úmarth*, his right name is Túrin son of Húrin, whom Morgoth holds in Angband, and has cursed all his kin. Doubt not the power of Morgoth Bauglir! Is it not written in me?" (*Húrin* 168). Gwindor seeks to protect Finduilas from Túrin's destructiveness; influenced by his own misery at the hands of the Evil One, he sees these qualities in Túrin as a result of Morgoth's curse.

Thus Túrin's true name is named in Nargothrond for the first time, an event that Túrin sees as a betrayal that will bring him to the attention of Morgoth. Seeing himself as a danger to those around him if his identity were known, he names himself Thuringud, "the hidden foe" (Salo 358). This name may also mean that he is a secret danger to himself; in the past, his own actions have been the cause of his misery. Finduilas, though knowing that her love for Túrin is unrequited, refuses to believe that his curse or his fate is unavoidable. She replies to Gwindor, arguing that "Adanedhel is mighty in the tale of the World, and his stature shall reach yet to Morgoth in some far day to come" (*Húrin* 169). She believes that he possesses the qualities needed to overcome his own fate, just as his true name, Túrin, means that he has a mind suitable for victory. At last she confronts Túrin about his true name: "Thurin Adanedhel, why did you hide your name from me? Had I known who you were I should not have honoured you less, but I should better have understood your grief" (*Húrin* 169). In puzzlement, Túrin asks, "Whom do you make me?" and she answers, "Túrin son of Húrin Thalion, captain of the North" (*Húrin* 169). Túrin fears that speaking his true name will bring the curse down upon Finduilas as well as himself, and in wrath he tells Gwindor, "In love I hold you for rescue and safe-keeping. But now you have done ill to me, friend, to betray my right name, and call down my doom upon me, from which I would lie hid" (*Húrin* 169-170). Gwindor answers, "The doom lies in yourself, not in your name" (*Húrin* 169-170). This statement is key to understanding Túrin as a character; the choices he makes are the cause of his downfall, not his fate or the curse of Morgoth.

As Túrin grows in status in Nargothrond, he takes on yet another name. He soon becomes an advisor to Orodreth on the question of whether to wage open or secret warfare on Morgoth. Advocating open fighting, Túrin builds a bridge over the river leading to the city to facilitate the passage of arms, a deed that Gwindor counsels against. Messengers sent by Cirdan

warn of the dangers to Nargothrond if the city persists in this course of action, but “Túrin now [commands] all the forces of Nargothrond, and [rules] all matters of war; indeed he [is] become stern and proud, and would order all things as he wished or thought good” (*Húrin* 171). The messengers advise the King to “[cast] the stones of your pride into the loud river, that the creeping evil may not find the gate,” referring to the bridge that Túrin had built, thinking to send troops across it to quell Morgoth’s forces (*Húrin* 173). Túrin does not take kindly to the implied rebuke of his authority. The occasion gives rise to another incidence of renaming, in which one of Túrin’s most well-known names is created. One of the messengers asks if Túrin is of the House of Hador, to which Túrin replies, “Here I am named Agarwaen, the Black Sword of Nargothrond,” naming himself after the black sword Gurthang, the reforged Anglachel (*Húrin* 174). Thus Túrin seeks to deflect evil from himself by yet another change in name, angrily saying, “A man’s name is his own, and should the son of Húrin learn that you have betrayed him when he would be hid, then may Morgoth take you and burn out your tongue!” (*Húrin* 174). Seeing the seeds of Túrin’s doom within him, the messenger answers, “you, it seems, will take counsel with your own wisdom, or with your sword only; and you speak haughtily. And I say to you, Agarwaen Mormegil [Bloodstained Black Sword], that if you do so, other shall be your doom than one of the Houses of Hador or Bëor might look for” (*Húrin* 175). Here Túrin’s ill-fate is proclaimed to be his own fault, the side effect of his own character rather than the curse of Morgoth.

The taking of the name Mormegil (also called Mormael, Mormaglir, Mormagli, Mormakil), the Black Sword, is significant because prior to this point, Túrin refused to bear the sword Anglachel in token of his grief over his friend’s death. Túrin names the blade Gurthang (also known as Gurtholfn, the Blacksword of the Rodothlim), Iron of Death. “So great [is] his prowess and skill in warfare on the confines of the Guarded Plain that he himself [becomes] known as Mormegil, the Black Sword; and the Elves [say], ‘The Mormegil cannot be slain, save by mischance, or an evil arrow from afar’” (*Silmarillion* 251). He puts the grief of Beleg behind him in renaming himself and takes up the sword again in defense of Nargothrond, his new home. Unfortunately, Túrin’s counsel of open war again proves ill, as the fame of the Black Sword, well known and feared by Orcs, spreads; “thus Nargothrond was revealed to the wrath and malice of Morgoth, but still at Túrin’s prayer his true name was not spoken, and rumour only spoke of Mormegil of Nargothrond” (*Jewels* 84). Morgoth sends Glaurung the fire drake, one of

the dragons of old, to Nargothrond to wreak his vengeance. Glaurung becomes the touchstone for Túrin's fate, the embodiment of the curse of Morgoth and Túrin's difficulty in overcoming it.

Túrin's warlike name Agarwaen becomes more accurate than he had foreseen when he first named himself thus. The sack of Nargothrond makes Túrin rue his counsel to Orodreth. Morgoth sends innumerable forces against the city; during the battle Orodreth is killed, and Gwindor is fatally wounded. Glaurung plunders the city, slaying or capturing those left behind in the city while the warriors are kept busy by the Orcs. Grief-stricken by the plight of the Elves and feeling that he has their blood on his head as a result of his ill-given advice, Túrin manages to draw Gwindor from the fight, who urges him to find Finduilas. Speaking with the foresight brought on by near death, he tells him, "And this last I say to you; she alone stands between you and your doom. If you fail her, it shall not fail to find you. Farewell!" (*Húrin* 177). By saving Finduilas, Túrin can redeem his past actions, keeping light and laughter alive in spite of his curse.

Túrin's true name plays an important role in the confrontation with the dragon. Túrin races back to Nargothrond, fighting his way through until he reaches the great beast. Glaurung mocks him, saying that he wears the Dragon-helm in honor of him. Túrin bravely defies him, and an unused note in one of the versions records that he says, "'Thou liest, and knowest it. For this image was made in scorn of thee; and while there is one to bear it doubt shall ever assail thee, lest the bearer deal thee thy doom.' 'Then it must await a master of another name,' said Glaurung; 'for Túrin son of Húrin I do not fear'" (*Unfinished* 155). Glaurung knows Túrin's true name and calls it insufficiently powerful to master him, saying that "a fate of evil is woven about thee, and thou mayst not untangle thy footsteps from it whitherever thou goest" (*Lost Tales* 86). In *The Lost Tales* version, Túrin shrugs off Glaurung's evil glance and cries, "Nay, from this hour shall none name me Túrin if I live. Behold, I will name me a new name and it shall be Turambar!" (86). This time Túrin seeks not to hide from Morgoth's curse but to create a new fate by renaming himself; as Turambar, Master of Fate, he comes closest to this goal. So strong is Túrin's will that he is able to strive with the dragon's insidious power longer than any other man has done, though he finally succumbs to the dragon's spell. Glaurung holds him immobile as the prisoners, including Finduilas, are marched past Túrin. They depart along the very bridge that he himself ordered built, one that led to Nargothrond's downfall as it was too sturdy to be destroyed quickly when the enemy had drawn too near to fend off. Truly, his pride was in those

stones, and now they are a torment to him as he hears Finduilas crying his name. Yet “not until her cries and the wailing of the captives [are] lost upon the northward road [does] Glaurung release Túrin, and he might not stop his ears against that voice that haunted him after” (*Húrin* 179). The sound of Finduilas calling his true name and urging him to do what is right rings forever in his ears.

The dragon cunningly withholds death from Túrin, giving him what is even more damaging: false names with enough of truth in them to cause him to despair. Glaurung releases Túrin, and the warrior tries to slay his foe; Glaurung admires his courage, but laughs at his attempts. Though Túrin now believes himself free of the dragon’s spell, it is not so; the dragon twists the truth to bend Túrin to his will. He names him, “Thankless fosterling, outlaw, slayer of thy friend, thief of love, usurper of Nargothrond, captain foolhardy, and deserter of thy kin” (*Silmarillion* 256). He spins a lie of Morwen and Niënor, the sister Túrin never met, claiming that he has abandoned them, “and Túrin being under the spell of Glaurung [hearkens] to his words, and he [sees] himself as in a mirror misshapen by malice, and [loathes] that which he [sees]” (*Silmarillion* 256). Túrin thinks himself strong enough to see the truth; and, though in anguish because of his desire to rescue Finduilas, he sees “ever in his mind the Orcs burning the house of Húrin or putting Morwen and Niënor to torment” (*Húrin* 181). Glaurung allows Túrin to go, doing more evil to him by releasing him than by killing him. He throws a last taunt at Túrin: “if Elf or Man be left to make tale of these days, then surely in scorn they will name thee, if thou spurnest this gift” of freedom (*Silmarillion* 257).

Túrin, cannot bear to be held in scorn; his pride will not allow it. He feels he must seek his mother and sister, even if it means doing the dragon’s will. As Gwindor had warned, his decision to do so and to abandon Finduilas seals his fate, “for of his abandoning of Failivrin in danger that he himself could see [comes] the very direst evil upon him and all he loved; and indeed his heart [is] confounded and wavered, and he [leaves] those places in uttermost shame and weariness” (*Lost Tales* 87). In his heart, Túrin knows that he is doing wrong; in believing he has overpowered the dragon he is overestimating himself, when in reality the dragon is manipulating him through his own pride into abandoning the right course of action. Túrin reaches the home of his mother, only to find that Morwen and Niënor are long gone, having left at last for the safety of Gondolin several years before. Finally, Túrin sees the truth as the last of the dragon’s spell falls from him, and he goes immediately to seek Finduilas, though by now all

trails are cold. He reaches the Eithel Ivryn, the crystal pools which laughed like his long-dead sister Lalaith and served as inspiration for Finduilas' name, but they have been defiled by Glaurung in his rampage across the lands, and Túrin can drink and be refreshed there no more. When he rescues a group of men from Orcs, he names himself again, saying, "I do but follow my trade, which is Orc-slaying," "and I dwell where my trade is. I am Wildman of the Woods" (*Húrin* 194). He disavows all lineage and all purpose in life beyond blind vengeance; his is the mechanical revenge of a nameless predator.

Túrin bitterly regrets his previous, prideful decision, falling into despair when the men tell him of the end of Finduilas. They say that, on the edge of death, "she looked upon us as though seeking one whom she had expected; and she said: 'Mormegil. Tell the Mormegil that Finduilas is here.' She said no more. But because of her latest words we laid her where she died" (*Húrin* 197). She does not call Túrin by his true name, or by her name for him, but by his war name, the only one of his old names that he will retain after her death. Gwindor warned Túrin that Finduilas stood between him and his doom; with her death, Thurin (the Secret) dies, and there is no hiding from Morgoth. Just as Lalaith's death meant the end of laughter in Túrin's life, so Finduilas' death means the end of the possibility of overcoming his fate. Brought down by grief and contempt at his own failings and bereft of will to live, Túrin goes to Haudh-en-Elleth, Mound of the Elf-maid, burial place of Finduilas. Now he knows the answer to the question Glaurung asked him, "Wonderest thou not wherefore I have withheld death from thee, O Túrin Mormakil, who wast once named brave?" (*Lost Tales* 86). He was kept alive to suffer a more fearsome fate than a simple death by dragon fire.

Túrin, however, cannot be held down for long; he finally concludes that he must put the past and its names behind him if he is to survive. At last, "the courage of the House of Hador [awakes] in him," and he says "in his heart: 'All my deeds and past days were dark and full of evil. But a new day is come. Here I will stay at peace, and renounce name and kin; and so will I put my shadow behind me, or at the least not lay it upon those that I love'" (*Húrin* 196). With this new approach, he takes "a new name, calling himself Turambar, which in the High-elven speech signified Master of Doom; and he [dwells] among the woodmen, and [is] loved by them, and he [charges] them to forget his name of old" (*Húrin* 196). In *The Lost Tales*, he calls himself Turambar son of the weary forest (Turumart go-Dhruathodauros or Turambar Rusitaurion), giving himself no parentage other than the wilds (89). But the individual cannot be changed by

the name; the name changes to suit the individual, and “with the change of a name he could not change wholly his temper” (*Húrin* 196). The old warrior spirit arises again in Túrin, and he goes to war against the servants of Morgoth again, though Brandir, the leader of the men of Brethil, hopes “rather to preserve his people by silence and secrecy. ‘The Mormegil is no more,’ [says] he, ‘yet have a care lest the valour of Turambar bring a like vengeance on Brethil!’” (*Húrin* 197). So Túrin puts down Gurthang, using bow and spear only; yet he will allow no Orcs near Haudh-en-Elleth out of respect for Finduilas’ memory, and the Orcs learn to shun the place.

Meanwhile, the notoriety of Túrin’s war name leads his mother and sister to seek Túrin. Word of the Black Sword comes to Morwen; not having heard definite word of her son in years, Morwen wishes to go seek him and will not be dissuaded by Thingol and Melian. Niënor refuses to be left behind, and together they go with Thingol’s men to seek word of Túrin near the sacked city of Nargothrond, now become Glaurung’s lair. The Elves think this a dangerous errand, but admire the women’s bravery, saying: “Truly, it is by lack of counsel not of courage that Húrin’s kin bring woe to others! Even so with Túrin; yet not so with his fathers” (*Húrin* 203). Like Túrin, Morwen and Niënor possess the reckless courage and pride in their own abilities that make them heroic but also lead them to much of their misery. Niënor’s naming, like Túrin’s, is indicative of her situation in life. In the days of blackness during which she was born, some time after Túrin’s departure for Gondolin, Morwen “named her Niënor, which is Mourning” (*Húrin* 75). Yet Niënor will not be ruled by this name, and when her mother attempts to dissuade her from coming to seek Túrin, she tells her, “‘Mourning you named me, but I will not mourn alone, for father, brother, and mother. But of these you only have I known, and above all do I love. And nothing that you fear not do I fear’” (*Húrin* 202). When Morwen and Niënor reach the hills near Nargothrond, Glaurung approaches, scattering the searchers’ party as their horses panic. He catches Niënor alone; as she comes over the top of the hill, she comes eye to eye with Glaurung. Because Niënor’s will is as strong as her brother’s, she is able to withstand Glaurung for a time. In the *Lost Tales* version, Morwen (there called Mavwin) is caught by Glaurung as well, and she asks if he knows anything of Túrin.

Glaurung’s answer is as twisted and deceitful as his character, and his words are fraught with the hidden power of naming. He replies,

“Lo! the names of all who dwelt here before the taking of the caves of my wisdom I know, and I say to thee that none who named himself Túrin went hence alive.”

And even so was Túrin's boast subtly turned against him, for these beasts love ever to speak thus, doubly playing with cunning words. "Then was Túrin slain in this evil place," [says] Mavwin, but the dragon [answers]: "Here did the name of Túrin fade for ever from the earth – but weep not, woman, for it was the name of a craven that betrayed his friends." (*Lost Tales* 98)

Whatever names Túrin might be called, coward was not one of them; Niënor replies, "'You lie... The children of Húrin at least are not craven. We fear you not.' Then Glaurung [laughs], for so [is] Húrin's daughter revealed to his malice. 'Then you are fools, both you and your brother,' [says] he. 'And your boast shall be made vain. For I am Glaurung!'" (*Húrin* 208-209). The dragon knows Túrin's true name and is able to use it against him, catching his family in the same web of power. Glaurung places a spell of forgetfulness on Niënor, causing her to forget speech: the names for everything, including her own. In blind panic, she flees into the wilds, unaware of what she is doing and separated from all of her friends. In her namelessness she is as one that does not exist; she has no memory and no personality. The courage and strength of character that she possessed flee with her name. Just as the animals were nameless before Adam named them, so she has no words to name the things of her surroundings. Finally, she comes into the land of Brethil, hungry and cold. Exhausted by her long wandering, she collapses on Haudh-en-Elleth, Finduilas' burial place.

In keeping with the concept that the name is equated with the personality, her renaming and relearning of the names of the world almost literally makes Niënor into a different person. Túrin still defends Haudh-en-Elleth in memory of Finduilas, and there he finds Niënor. He comforts her and questions her concerning her origins, but she cannot remember and weeps in frustration. Túrin tells her, "'I will give you a name, and call you Níniel, Maid of Tears.' And at that name she [looks] up, and she [shakes] her head, but [says]: 'Níniel,'" the first word she speaks "after her darkness, and it [is] her name among the woodmen ever after" (*Húrin* 215-216). As when Finduilas came near to Túrin's true name when she named him Thurin, Túrin comes close to Niënor's true name by calling her Níniel. Níniel quickly relearns speech and often asks, "What is the name of this thing? For in my darkness I lost it" (*Húrin* 217). Above all, she seeks to learn the names of things once more, re-establishing their place in her world. Like Túrin, she has the feeling that she has been dogged by a shadow, a nameless fate she has escaped only with difficulty. She and Túrin become friends, and one day Níniel says,

“Of all things I have now asked the name, save you. What are you called?”
“Turambar,” he [answers]. Then she [pauses] as if listening for some echo; but she [says]: “And what does that say, or is it just the name for you alone?” “It means...Master of the Dark Shadow. For I also, Níniel, had my darkness, in which dear things were lost; but now I have overcome it, I deem.” (*Húrin* 217-218)

Turambar echoes Túrin’s true name, and Túrin hopes the name is powerful enough to overcome the curse of Morgoth. Thus Túrin, by naming himself the master of his fate, hopes to master it in reality as well; and while his humble attitude lasts, he indeed seems to do so, or at least to achieve a brief happiness.

Brief indeed, for before too long a time, each unaware of the other’s true name and identity, Níniel and Túrin begin to fall in love. Brandir, the leader of Brethil, reveals to Níniel “that Turambar was Túrin son of Húrin, and though she knew not the name a shadow fell on her heart” (*Jewels* 96). Something about the name still strikes a chord within the blank space of her memory, but Túrin asks for her hand in marriage, and she gives it in spite of her sense of foreboding. Then Túrin “[says] in his heart: ‘Twas well that I did name myself Turambar, for lo! I have overcome the doom of evil that was woven about my feet’” (*Lost Tales* 102). Túrin promises not to go to war unless their home is threatened, for Níniel is gentle and fears to see him go to battle. Feeling he has found victory in his new name, he thinks “to put his fate for ever from him and live out his life there in the woodland homes with children about him” (*Húrin* 101-102). Yet Túrin muses to himself, “Haudh-en-Elleth! From the green mound she came. Is that a sign, and how shall I read it?” (*Húrin* 218). Gwindor’s words about Finduilas standing between Túrin and his fate ring throughout Túrin’s life, but not until the end will their meaning become completely clear.

Túrin is not permitted to live for long with his fate left unfronted; by hiding his true name, he is hiding his true self, which cannot long remain covered. Soon the lands of Brethil are threatened again by Glaurung, and the Black Sword must go to war once more. Then Túrin says to himself, “Now comes the test, in which my boast shall be made good, or fail utterly. I will flee no more. Turambar indeed I will be, and by my own will and prowess I will surmount my doom – or fall. But falling or riding, Glaurung at least I will slay” (*Húrin* 223). Killing Glaurung becomes the test for Túrin’s ability to overcome the curse by renaming himself. He

will overcome his fate once and for all, or he will die. Fate plays an exceedingly important role in naming in *The Children of Húrin*, and Tolkien has strong views upon the subjects of fate and free will. A name can be seen as a fate, a destiny to achieve. At the same time, “as a Christian writer, Tolkien also modifies the pagan conception of fate to imply its providential direction” (Wood 15). Doom in Tolkien’s works (in the sense of fate, not necessarily a negative sense) has “the triple meaning of destiny, calamity, and judgment. As *destiny*, it signifies that every living thing has its own peculiar mortality; as *calamity* it means that many things end ill; but also as *judgment* it betokens everyone’s final state as determined by the just and merciful verdict of Iluvatar” (Wood 15). Morgoth’s curse is fate in the sense of calamity, but the overarching definition of fate as judgment, consistent with Thingol’s view of fate but not with Túrin’s, ensures that the end will be well. This is the fate that Húrin trusted, and he believed that Morgoth’s curse could be overcome. Húrin does not fear death because he does not view it as a defeat. Though man’s fate is to die, he is free to choose the manner of his life, and even his death can be seen in terms of eucatastrophe, the positive end. Fate and death can be a victory, as Húrin recognizes but Túrin does not.

Tolkien leaves hints that Túrin possessed everything required within himself and within his true name to choose a different destiny, though Tolkien does imply that it would be difficult for Túrin to overcome his circumstances. Nevertheless, the possibility remains; there is always a chance that he could have chosen differently. As he wavered between seeking Finduilas and seeking his mother and sister, *The Lost Tales* suggests that, had he chosen to seek Finduilas, “maybe in that desperate venture he had found a kindly and swift death or perchance an ill one, and maybe he had rescued Failivrin and found happiness yet not thus was he fated to earn the name he had taken anew, and the drake reading his mind suffered him not thus lightly to escape his tide of ill” (87). Túrin blames the circumstances of his life for how he turned out, saying he has been made “a hard man by [his] fate” (*Húrin* 115). Melian gives great insight into Túrin’s character when she warns, “greatness is in you, and your fate is twined with that of the Elven-folk, for good or for ill. Beware of yourself, lest it be ill” (*Húrin* 85). Melian is able to see that the cause of his downfall lies within himself, not in his fate or within his name. The curse makes his life difficult, but it does not control his life; he still retains responsibility.

Túrin’s pride holds him back from changing his fate. Renaming himself, while a powerful event, is not enough; he must change his character and overcome his faults, as Thingol

warns, “If in days to come you remember the words of Melian, it will be for your good: fear both the heat and the cold of your heart, and strive for patience, if you can” (*Húrin* 85). Over and over again, Túrin’s pride and his temper are what cause the misery in his life, not the curse of Morgoth, as he is warned by many. Yet Túrin will not humble himself, saying there is “a curse upon me, for all I do is ill” (*Lost Tales* 76). Before Saeros attempts to kill Túrin, Thingol warns him, “Indeed I feel that some shadow of the North has reached out to touch us tonight. Take heed, Saeros, lest you do the will of Morgoth in your pride” (*Húrin* 88). Thingol wisely sees that these men, in their pride, are working not against but rather for Morgoth, for pride is of Morgoth. They are not choosing right over wrong, and thus are enslaving their own wills. This is true thralldom, the servitude that Túrin so fears, not understanding that he is forging his own chains through his decisions.

Túrin blames his problems on Morgoth’s curse, feeling it to be inescapable; he changes his name often to avert the curse, but each time Morgoth finds him. Undeniably, “the malice of that Vala does create hard circumstances that blight his life,” but it is also undeniable that Túrin, like most people, plays a large part in creating his own misery (West 242). In *The Lost Tales* version, Glaurung warns Túrin, “Nay, get thee gone, O Turambar Conqueror of Fate! First thou must meet thy doom an thou wouldst o’ercome it” (86). In this the deceitful dragon speaks truth for a change. Túrin’s constant renaming is hiding from, not confronting through free will, his doom. Wood ties Tolkien to Paul and Augustine, those “who argue that real freedom is the liberty to choose and do the good, and that to do evil is to act unfreely, to exercise an enslaved will” (70). Free will and the ability to choose our own fate is the greatest gift of God. Interestingly, one of the versions of Turambar’s name (Master of Fate) is Turúmarth, Master of Evil Fate (Salo 358). Túrin’s renaming gives himself a name that should give him the mastery to choose good over evil. In *The Lays of Beleriand*, he is called Túrin Thaliadrin (son of Thalion) and even Túrin Thalion (Steadfast), just as his father was called. Húrin Thaliadrin, possessing the same name and given the same curse, manages to choose rightly regardless of the cost. By contrast, Túrin, with the same name and under the same curse, feels he cannot do so.

Túrin consistently overestimates his strength, and when it is found to be insufficient, succumbs to despair. Despair itself is a form of pride, for only one with the power to know all ends would know when there is cause to give up hope. Túrin’s bravery is undeniable, yet that is not enough for true heroism. He must also have hope – not hope that he will survive, for that

undermines bravery, but hope that what is good will prevail over what is evil. The tale of Túrin is undeniably sad with a very unhappy ending, but a happy ending is not the goal of true heroism. The true Quest requires real heroism, requires the character “to struggle with hope, yet without the assurance of victory. Good endings may signal a too-easy victory that does not deepen our souls, while an unhappy conclusion reached nobly may be the mark of real character” (Wood 147). Húrin’s story is undoubtedly tragic, but it is a triumph regardless; Túrin’s story is more difficult to evaluate.

Túrin finally attempts to overcome his fate by his own strength through defeating Glaurung. He hides in a crevasse called Cabed-en-Aras, waiting for the dragon to cross it. As he does so, Túrin stabs upwards with Gurthang, piercing Glaurung’s vulnerable belly. As the worm lashes in his death throes, the sword is pulled from Túrin’s hand. At last Glaurung lies still, and Túrin climbs out of the ravine. He speaks to Glaurung who watches him balefully, using his true name to proclaim the victory: “Die now and the darkness have thee! Thus is Túrin son of Húrin avenged” (*Silmarillion* 267). With that, he pulls Gurthang from Glaurung, but the black blood pouring forth burns his hand, and the evil breath of Glaurung causes him to faint.

Níniel too must confront Glaurung, the personification of the curse of Morgoth. She refuses to wait for news of her husband and begins to journey towards Cabed-en-Aras, for she says, “The Master of Doom is gone to challenge his doom far hence, and how shall I stay here and wait for the slow coming of tidings, good or ill?” (*Húrin* 231). Running ahead of Brandir, Níniel finds her husband unconscious next to the dragon. As she bandages Túrin’s burned hand, Glaurung opens his eyes for the last time and speaks “with his last breath, saying: ‘Hail, Niënor, daughter of Húrin. We meet again ere the end. I give thee joy that thou hast found thy brother at last. And now thou shalt know him: a stabber in the dark, treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, and a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin! But the worse of all his deeds thou shalt feel in thyself” (*Silmarillion* 268). With that, the foul beast dies having revealed the truth about the names of the children of Húrin. The last of his spell falls from Níniel, and she remembers all the days of her life and her true name. She cannot live with this truth, however; in horror at what she and Túrin have inadvertently done, she cries, “Farewell, O twice beloved! *A Túrin Turambar turun ambartanen*: master of doom by doom mastered!” (*Silmarillion* 268). Níniel runs swiftly to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras, crying, “Water, water! Take now Níniel Niënor daughter of Húrin; Mourning, Mourning daughter of Morwen! Take me and bear me down to

the Sea!” (*Húrin* 244). She will not strive against her name anymore. Before those who followed her can stop her, she casts herself into the deadly ravine, and “Cabed-en-Aras was no more: Cabed Naeramarth, the Leap of Dreadful Doom, thereafter it was named by men; for no deer would ever leap there again, and all living things shunned it, and no man would walk upon its shore” (*Húrin* 244). Níniel returns to her true name, Niënor, Mourning; there is no hope or joy for her left in this world, and she cannot reside in it any longer.

The truth of the children of Húrin must yet be revealed to Túrin. Túrin wakes, finds his hand bandaged, and thinks that the people of Brethil cared for him. Brandir, who saw all that had passed but was too late to stop it, tells him the truth about Níniel. Túrin refuses to believe him. In anger and pain, “Yes, I am Túrin son of Húrin,” Túrin cries, and “so long ago you guessed. But nothing do you know of Niënor my sister” (*Húrin* 251). Brandir cries “out upon Turambar with the last words of Glaurung, that he was a curse to his kin and to all that harboured him” (*Silmarillion* 269). In a blind rage, Túrin kills Brandir and runs to Haudh-en-Elleth, not knowing where else to go. One of Thingol’s men, who has been searching for Niënor ever since she fled under the spell of the dragon, finds him there to warn him against Glaurung. Túrin replies bitterly that it is too late to warn him of that, but he asks news of Morwen and Niënor. When he hears the story of how they were lost, “Then Túrin’s heart [stands] still, hearing the feet of doom that would pursue him to the end. ‘Say on!’ he [cries]. ‘And be swift!’” (*Húrin* 254). Túrin still sees fate as the curse of Morgoth, and he dreads what he will hear. When he hears the description of Niënor, Túrin knows there is no mistaking it: she was indeed Níniel. In agony, Túrin cries “I am blind! Did you not know? Blind, blind, groping since childhood in a dark mist of Morgoth!” (*Húrin* 255). With what Túrin sees as his doom fulfilled and all chance at happiness gone, he has no desire to live. He runs to Cabed-en-Aras, now Cabed Naeramarth, but he will not soil the waters where Niënor has cast herself. He draws Gurthang and asks the sword if it will kill him. Then, “from the blade rang a cold voice in answer: ‘Yea, I will drink thy blood gladly, that so I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay thee swiftly’” (*Silmarillion* 261). Túrin dies, following Niënor beyond where their curse can follow them.

So end the children of Húrin, and so ended “the name most tearful / Of Niënor the sorrowful, and the name most sad / Of Thalion’s son Túrin o’erthrown by fate” (*Lays of Beleriand* lines 5-7). Yet Túrin was given one last name: on his gravestone was written Túrin

Turambar Dagnir Glaurunga, or Túrin Master of Fate Slayer of Glaurung. Dagnir Glaurunga (Bane of Glaurung) becomes Túrin's final name; and insofar that Glaurung embodied the curse that shadowed his short life, Túrin did master his fate and win a new, true name for himself. In the end, Túrin wins fame by slaying Glaurung, the embodiment of his wrong choices and his curse; thus he did right by atoning for his previous wrongs, even as he was unable to overcome his own pride, the true bane of his existence.

Though *The Children of Húrin* is a tragic tale, there is still hope within its pages. In the early versions of the story of Túrin, the storyteller adds some information about the ultimate fate of the children of Húrin. After death, Húrin and Morwen (Úrin and Mavwin in this version) request that Túrin and Niënor be allowed to enter the blessed realm. Their prayers are answered, and "the Gods had mercy on their unhappy fate, so that those twain Túrin and Nienori entered into Fos' Almir, the bath of flame...and so were all their sorrows and stains washed away, and they dwelt as shining Valar among the blessed ones" (*Lost Tales* 115-116). At last these two of the sorrowful names have peace; and it is said, at the ends of the world, "Turambar indeed shall stand beside Fionwe in the Great Wrack, and Melko and his drakes shall curse the sword of Mormakil" (*Lost Tales* 116). Morgoth will ultimately be defeated, and the "redeemed Túrin is fated to cast down Melko-Melkor-Morgoth with his great sword" (West 244). Truly, Túrin will become Master of the Shadow, playing a vital role in the defeat of Morgoth, the Enemy, the shadowy evil. There is hope even for the hapless one.

This created myth, full of the power of naming, awakens something long left to slumber in the modern world. Quoting Philip Wheelwright, Hopper argues that the "loss of myth-consciousness" is "the most devastating loss that humanity can suffer;...myth-consciousness is the bond that unites men both with one another and with the unplumbed Mystery from which mankind is sprung and without reference to which the radical significance of things goes to pot" (114-115). Myth is essential to meaning in our lives because it opens us up to the true meaning to be found within spiritual belief. Kelsey agrees, stating that, "Lacking any use of myth, man becomes only a partial human being, because he has lost his principal means of dealing with spiritual reality" (5). In the imbalance of an age where the historic, the mythic, and the religious are considered inferior to the technological and scientific, "there are heights and depths to man and the world around him that twentieth century men have overlooked, and it is these reaches that may be experienced and expressed in myths which can give meaning and reaction to our

lostness and confusion” (Kelsey 5). For Tolkien, myth creation and naming bring us closer to God through subcreation, the God-given right and gift of mankind made in the image of God.

Thus the thread of connections unwinds, from the foundation built upon language and myth to the culmination of Tolkien’s vision. Language and myth are inseparable, being connected by metaphoric thinking which finds its purest expression in name. Tolkien views this expression through the lens of Christianity; name in myth is subcreation, a reflection of biblical naming. Names themselves are the source of subcreation for Tolkien. Creation itself is naming, further expression of metaphoric thought linking language and myth to the creation process. Man is also a namer, having been created in God’s image, and naming brings order, establishing the place of a thing in the universe. When we name ourselves, we define our own place in the universe. The name of a person is linked to the essence of the person; we are our names, the one aspect of being that we can create. A right or true name is one that correctly expresses the established place of our essence in the universe. A new name signifies a change in personality; one must be renamed to renew conformity of essence with name.

Tolkien takes these principles and combines them in a synthesis of ideas, illustrated by the names in *The Children of Húrin*. Húrin’s name is indicative of his inherent heroism and hope by which he is able to overcome in mind the curse of Morgoth. He does not hide from it, as Túrin does from what he perceives as his fate. Húrin believes in free will and the power of the indomitable will to overcome the curse on the family. He gives Túrin his Father-name, the right and true name which should give Túrin the power to overcome the curse as well. Morwen gives Túrin a different view on life through the Mother-name, one of not only pride and vengeance but also of unconquerable bravery. Lalaith’s death is also the death of the named characteristic, laughter, and this lack causes Túrin to seek one like her in all women that he meets, finding aspects of her character in both Finduilas and Niënor and ultimately losing all three women.

Túrin’s names exhibit the changes in personality that he experiences. As the Dragon-helm, he possesses one half of what he needs to overcome the curse; he has bravery (like his mother Morwen), but no hopeful outlook, no belief in his inherent freedom (unlike his father Húrin). As the Woodwose, he is a forlorn outcast from society. As Neithan (the Wronged), he is prideful and refuses to accept Thingol’s doom, one of merciful judgment. The name is unfit for him because his pride blinds him to his own flaws, leading him to blame his failures on the curse. When Túrin slays Beleg Cúthalion, he slays *thalion* within his own name (son of Húrin), the

steadfast, hopeful legacy of his father. The endless laughter of the pools of Ivrin heals him of the grief of this friend-slaying; the pools remind him of his sister Lalaith and are the origins of Finduilas' name, who is symbolic of hope and joy in Túrin's life. Had he embraced all that Finduilas represented, she would have stood between him and his curse; the choices that lay along that path would have changed his character so that he might have overcome his flaws. As Thurin (the Secret), he might have lived peacefully and humbly with her. Instead, as Agarwaen son of Úmarth (Bloodstained son of Ill-fate), his pride and violent actions continually lead to sorrowful outcomes. As Thuringud (the Hidden Foe), he believes that, under the curse, he is a secret danger both to himself and to those around him. As the Mormegil (Black Sword), Túrin is the bane of evil but is also trapped in a world of war, never of peace. As the Wildman of the woods, nothing is left to him but the slaughter of evil. As Turambar (Master of Fate), Túrin ceases renaming himself with the purpose of hiding from the curse and instead renames himself to create a new fate, one in which he conquers his ill-fate through sheer strength of will.

Yet is bravery, force of will, and renaming to reflect these qualities enough for Túrin to prevail? Glaurung, as the curse of Morgoth personified, hides the truth by his use of lies and false names. He causes Niënor to forget her name, making her lose a part of herself. By renaming her Níniel, Túrin seeks to establish a new place for her in the order of the world, but he does so with incomplete knowledge, leading to tragedy. Thus she shares in the curse, but she also is part of Túrin's fate in terms of judgment. Her life is inextricably bound to his; by being together, they feel that they have overcome the shadow, but until they are aware of the truth of their own names, this is untrue. By killing Glaurung, Túrin overthrows the curse, though it is too late for him to redeem his life. He had the qualities within himself, the "mind suitable for victory," to overcome the curse, but not himself. Pride is his true bane, not Glaurung. Both children of Húrin find the truth about their names to be unbearable in this life; their true names show them where they should be in the order of the world, but they cannot make their way back to that place. Túrin's return to the burial mound of Finduilas, the place of truth that has played such a vital role throughout the events of the story, ties the narrative of naming together, back to Lalaith and Finduilas and the endless search in his life for lost hope and what he would have needed to be truly the Master of Fate. Yet Túrin and Níniel both found hope beyond the circles of this world, under the merciful judgment, the true fate, of Iluvatar.

From the many names of Túrin to the role names play in our fate to the reasons why we bestow names on anything at all, Tolkien's vision of the power of names resonates through our lives today. The importance of naming cannot be underestimated, both to our past with its mythologies and to our future. Language is the power by which we can create wonders or horrors, and names are the most powerful words in language because they give us the power to recreate ourselves. Mythology is the vessel we are given to express timeless ideas of great meaning, and names are the most important part of mythology because they shape the meaning of those ideas. Subcreation is the ability we are given as a gift from God; created mythology, the story that we tell, is the gift that we can bestow upon all who come after us.

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