

The Fascination with Evil in Anglophone Juvenile Literature: Lord Sauron

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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je analýza Lorda Saurona, zlých postav, které mu podléhají a celkového pojetí zla v dílech J.R.R. Tolkiena, jmenovitě především v trilogii *Pán prstenů* a *Silmarillionu*. První část práce se zabývá rozborem literární postavy a vyobrazením padouchů v literatuře, dále je zde také objasněn pojem fantasy a Tolkienův přínos tomuto žánru. Druhá část práce objasňuje vnímání zla v Tolkienových dílech, dále pak analýzu Lorda Saurona a všech dalších zlých postav, které podléhají jeho moci.

Klíčová slova: Sauron, Temný Pán, Jeden Prsten, zlo, J.R.R. Tolkien, *Pán Prstenů*, *Silmarillion*, fantasy

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is an analysis of Lord Sauron, evil characters which succumb to his powers and overall perception of evil in J.R.R. Tolkien's work, namely in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Silmarillion*. The first part of this thesis deals with the analysis of literary characters and literary villains, then it also explains the concept of fantasy and Tolkien's contribution to this area. The second part clarifies perception of evil in Tolkien's work, and an analysis of Lord Sauron and all other characters, which succumb to his powers.

Keywords: Sauron, Dark Lord, the One Ring, evil, J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, fantasy

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

John Ronald Ruel Tolkien is considered to be one of the most well-known and influential fantasy writers of the twentieth century. Although his lifetime work is pervasive containing many scientific publications and prose, he achieved his biggest success with his fantasy novel for kids *The Hobbit* which success led Tolkien into writing a sequel under the name *The Lord of the Rings*, which ended up being a trilogy. Thanks to his skills Tolkien was able to create a brand new elaborated fantasy world with its own history, rules, and inhabitants. As every piece of detail is thoroughly explained and coherent, the reader's experience of these books is extraordinarily complex and letting yourself being drag deep into the story is more than easy.¹

After the dead of Tolkien's father his mother Mable, despite the protests from her family members, firmly adhered to the Catholic faith and so did Ronald and his younger brother Hilary. Thereafter their mother passed away too, Tolkien locked himself up in his faith even more strongly. The fact that he had such a strong relationship with religion has significantly reflected on his perception of the world and especially of good and evil.² In this thesis, I will examine the effects of Tolkien's faith in his work namely in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Silmarillion*. The primary focus will be aimed at his perception of evil and how it reflected the whole story and how is it represented in the fantastic world of Arda, reflectively in Middle-earth.

Throughout Tolkien's stories, reader witnesses the constant battle between good and evil and between heroic and villain, wicked characters. The main part of this these will contain an analysis of the most relevant and significant evil characters, Tolkien has created. Lord Sauron is the main antagonist and evil character in the whole *LOTR* trilogy, and since Tolkien created each character as a very complex and coherent unit, the reader can easily imagine the figure as real. The aim is to analyze his creation and how it was influenced by Tolkien's perception of evil and also Sauron's development and appearance throughout the story. The focus will also be given to all other wicked figures which are displayed in the narrative. The goal is to find out about their creation and development throughout the story and also about their connections and relationship with the Dark Lord himself.

¹ David Brin, *The Lord of the Rings: J.R.R. Tolkien vs the Modern Age* (Michigan: Nimble Books LLC, 2010) 1.

² Humphrey Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) 73-76.

I. THEORY

1 LITERARY CHARACTER

A literary character is one of the few elements, which besides others, needs almost every narrative. They are not represented only as human figures but for example as animals, creatures, and objects. Literary characters work as carriers of the information, thoughts and help author to build up the story.³ The character in literature can be understood in two different perspectives. First one is to perceive the character as the actual person or figure in the story. The second one concerns person's set of behaviour, manners and personal beliefs.⁴

There is an extensive distribution of the characters according to their vocation or their character properties, and one of the most well-known is a division into the protagonist and the antagonist of the story. The protagonist is basically the major character in the whole narrative. He creates the plot and drives the entire action, faces problems and crises, which need to be solved. As protagonists are raising sympathy and compassion in the reader and are usually depicted as a positive characters or heroes. This though is not a rule and even protagonist can possess negative properties and appear to the reader as unlikable.⁵ On the other hand, antagonist created an adversary to the protagonist and is represented by a single villain character or a group of people and organization. Antagonists primary purpose is to thwart protagonists attempt to achieve his goal.⁶ Another aspect of character division is in the complexity of their personality and whether or not they are able to change throughout the story. We distinguish between two pairs, namely flat and round characters, then static and dynamic. A round character is anyone with a complex identity, personage and is developed in the story. His or hers acts appear to be very realistic and trustworthy. On the contrary, flat characters are a complete opposite of the round characters. The flat character is displayed with only a few personal details or with one kind of characteristic and lacks the complexity. Blakey Vermeule describes the difference between flat and round characters as follows "If you are a flat character, you have no inner life. Instead, you ride on an animal that shows off your main feature. This flat character has its own even flatter character as a

³ "Character," Literature, Oxford Research Encyclopedias, accessed April 20, 2018, <http://literature.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-107>.

⁴ "Character and Characterization," Critical Concepts, accessed April 20, 2018. <http://www.k-state.edu/english/baker/english287/cc-character.htm>.

⁵ "Definition of a Protagonist in Literature, and Examples," The Balance, accessed April 21, 2018. <https://www.thebalance.com/protagonist-1277128>.

⁶ "Learn About Characters in Fiction," The Balance, accessed April 21, 2018. <https://www.thebalance.com/the-definition-of-character-in-fiction-writing-1277093>.

sidekick. Round characters, meanwhile, are open and complex, much more like real human beings.”⁷ The pair of the static and dynamic characters carries the information about character’s ability to develop throughout the story. The main feature of the static character is its constancy throughout the story. Essentially, none of the events in the narratives changes the characters personality and does not endure any transformation. On the other hand, the dynamic character is a complete opposite to the static one. The dynamic character is the one in the story, that undergoes a certain transformation during the story. The change is usually a result of the course of events or the main dispute the character has to deal with. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf can be marked as a typical dynamic character while he underwent a mental and partly a physical transformation.⁸

1.1 Villain characters

Cambridge dictionary describes the word villain as “a bad person who harms other people or break the law.”⁹ Speaking of literary villains, Oxford Dictionary offers a slightly different explanation “a character whose evil actions or motives are important to the plot.”¹⁰ The outcome from both of these definitions is that a villain represents something evil, ghoulish and selfish that in the literature stands out as an opponent to the hero. The clash between these two characters represents the conflict between evil and good. Villain’s role is to avert the hero from fulfilling his vocation but also helps highlighting hero’s good features and moral values by opposing him. In the narrative, villain creates a conflict usually out of his selfishness and it is heroes mission to solve the crisis and defeat the evil character.¹¹ Although the features and description of villain characters might sound familiar as the description of the antagonist and though a good deal of villains also plays the role of the antagonist, it is not a rule. The antagonist is described as a “character, or a group of characters, which stands in opposition to the protagonist” but it is important to know, that antagonist is not always an evil character. He or she might just have different opinions or

⁷ Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 80-82.

⁸ “Static and Dynamic Characterization,” Critical Concepts, accessed April 21, 2018, http://www.k-state.edu/english/baker/english287/cc-static_vs_dynamic_characterization.htm.

⁹ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “Villain,” accessed April 21, 2018, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/villain>.

¹⁰ *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, s.v. “Villain,” accessed April 21, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/villain>.

¹¹ “Villain,” Literary Terms, accessed April 21, 2018, <https://literaryterms.net/villain/>.

attitudes than the protagonist.¹² An example of a villain, who is not the antagonist but vice versa the protagonist in the narrative might be considered Chuck's Palahniuk Tyler Durden in *the Fight Club* and also Heathcliff in the Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.¹³ But this is just the exception to the rule, and most of the villain characters truly are the antagonists. Some of the best known are for example Lord Voldemort in the *Harry Potter* books by J.K. Rowling, The Grand Witch from *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, Hannibal Lecter in the *Red Dragon* by Thomas Harris, Tolkien's Lord Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and many others. Even though villains are undoubtedly evil and selfish character and common sense tells us we should be repelled and disgusted by them, people sometimes tend to like the villain more, than the hero of the story. Daniel A. Forbes explains this phenomenon in his *Aesthetic of Evil* "Since the villain's power generates narrative drama, perhaps we find the villain appealing because we would like to enjoy that sort of power." The main attribute of a villain is their "power" which allows them to turn the action in the story by his desires, and since the evil in the narrative is equally considerable as good we tend to search for reasons and arguments to incline to one side or another.¹⁴

¹² "Antagonist," Literary Terms, accessed April 21, 2018, <https://literaryterms.net/antagonist/>.

¹³ "20 Books With Villain Protagonists," Bustle, accessed April 22, 2018, <https://www.bustle.com/articles/153308-20-books-with-villain-protagonists>.

¹⁴ Daniel A. Forbes, "The Aesthetic of Evil," in *Vader, Voldemort and Other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media*, ed. James Heit (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011), 18.

2 FANTASY

Literature accompanies people in everyday life and for some, it might be a tool for learning, for some just an escape from the reality. Fantastic literature is a genre of fiction which generally evokes in the reader a real, complex picture created out of devisable elements.¹⁵ In general, the modern fantastic literature contains science fiction and fantasy but has extensive root in the myths, legends and fairy tales. So, what is the difference between science fiction and fantasy when both of these genres create an unreal environment which is rationally justified.¹⁶

2.1 Fantasy Literature

According to Fiona Kelleghan “Most modern definitions of science fiction accordingly make some reference both to the need for novelty and the use of the imagination (an ancient requirement of all forms of the fantastic) and to the need for logic, rigor, and control by the strict requirements of science (a distinctively modern demand).” Generally, science fiction or sci-fi deals with the conception of the world with developed and fabricated inventions and technologies, with alternative forthcoming endings of the world and the possibilities of an extra-terrestrial life on other planets.¹⁷

Fantasy is a literary and a movie genre which is primarily based on the usage of the supernatural forces and magic in imaginary worlds with its own history such as in Tolkien’s Middle-earth or Lewis’s Narnia. Another typical feature of the fantasy genre is the occurrence of mysterious creatures such as dragons, wizards, elves or vampires.¹⁸ John H. Timmerman says about fantasy “It does more than simply restructure a reality which we already know-it also offers a parallel reality which gives us a renewed awareness of what we already know. There is an enormous and unquenchable thirst in humankind for precisely this opportunity to pause.” and the truth is, that fantasy indeed offers the reader an escape from the everyday reality and roam through another world.¹⁹

¹⁵ Štěpán Vlačín, ed., *Slovník literární teorie* (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1984), 109.

¹⁶ Fiona Kelleghan, ed., *Classics of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature* (Pasadena: Salem Press, Inc., 2002), 1.

¹⁷ Kelleghan, *Classic of Science Fiction*, 4.

¹⁸ Martha C. Sammons, *War of the Fantasy Worlds: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien on Art and Imagination* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 22.

¹⁹ John H. Timmerman, *Other Worlds: The Fantasy Genre* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983) 1.

Even though fantasy had its biggest breakthrough during the twentieth century, its roots and provenance reach way back. As the predecessors of today's Fantasy are considered myths and mythological literature, legends and fairy tales. From the mythological stories about Prometheus to the poem about Beowulf, which itself contained many imaginative creatures. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* published in 1595 by Shakespeare or *the Gulliver's Travels* by Johnathan Swift might be considered as other forerunners of the fantasy genre with many fantastic elements. The modern fantasy as it is known today shaped mostly during the nineteenth and twentieth century and thanks to the authors such as George MacDonald, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, it became a very popular genre searched not only by children but also by adults.²⁰

2.2 Tolkien and Fantasy

J.R.R. Tolkien significantly contributed to the development of modern fantasy and is considered to be as one of the founders of heroic fantasy as his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Hobbit* woke enormous wave of interest from his fans and readers all over the world.²¹ Since Tolkien's fantasy stories appeared to be such a huge success and the readers appreciated escape to the imaginary world with complex history, many likable characters, and a catchy storyline, many authors such as J.K. Rowling with her *Harry Potter*, Suzanne Collins with *Hunger Games* or George R.R. Martin and *the Game of Thrones* followed Tolkien's footsteps²². As Tolkien was a huge fan and an admirer of Norse and Celtics mythology, they both became one of his sources and inspirations for his fantasy works. For fantasy genre used to be mostly focused on the younger audience, his goal was to "write mythopoeic stories disguised as popular "excursionary" thrillers".²³

In his fantasy works, Tolkien tried to create a very creditable and elaborate environment starting with the whole plot and characters, ending with the secondary world he managed to established. For the reader to be completely drawn into the story, he believed that every detail is essential. That is why he draw detailed maps of Middle-earth, created languages and

²⁰ Myrna Allen, Linda Bedwell, Jonathan Lewis, Kate Thompson, Jocelyne Veinot, and Byron Walker, "A Brief History of Fantasy," *YA Hotline*, no. 76 (2006): 5-6, <https://ojs.library.dal.ca/YAHS/article/view/403>.

²¹ Michael D.C. Drout, *J.R.R. Tolkiens Encyclopedie: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 376-377.

²² James Ellis, "How J.R.R. Tolkien Redefined Fantasy Stories," *Newsweek*, May 3, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/legacy-lifetime-jrr-tolkiens-extended-impact-563520>.

²³ Sammons, *Fantasy Worlds*, 4.

history but also incorporated elements such as doings and items, which are familiar to the reader to induce pleasant and notorious environment.²⁴

²⁴ Haifeng Pu, "Tolkien's Fantasy World," *Theory and Practise in Language Studies* 2, no. 9 (September 2012): 1978, <http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol02/09/29.pdf>.

II. ANALYSIS

3 EVIL

According to the Oxford online dictionary Evil is defined as something "profoundly immoral and wicked," "something which is harmful and undesirable" or "embodying or associated with the force of the Devil."²⁵ For most people, the nature and the perception of evil come from *the Bible*. The story of Cain and Abel in one of the oldest preserved story of murder when Cain killed his brother out of jealousy. Both brothers offered the fruit of their work to God, but he appreciated only Abel's gift of meat.²⁶ This story displays first appearance and early roots of evil and murder. However, the most iconic and well-known evil and demonic creature and figure is probably the Devil. According to the Bible, Lucifer was created by God as an angelic, perfect being but his selfishness and vanity caused his fall.²⁷

In the present world, evil is everywhere surrounding, and people just don't feel its presence. Nevertheless, the everyday contact is inevitable especially through media where information and news about wars, murders, genocide are shoot right at you. The perception of biblical hell in today's society might be comparable to the Nazis working and concentration camps where inhuman treatment was on the daily schedule.²⁸

Evil can refer either to a person, situation or an action and an Evil person or human is essentially someone, who does evil for its own beneficial reason and his acts are conscious. According to Svendsen, evil can be divided into four types. The first one is Demonic Evil, which is being carried out only for selfish reasons and its own good and profit. Demonic Evil is used for satisfying own needs while harming and watching others suffer. Example of this first type of evil might be a raping. The second types Svendsen mentions is Instrumental Evil which is being performed in order to achieve specific goal or purpose. The performer is aware of the evil nature of the action, but the ultimate goal must not be evil itself. The essence of Idealistic Evil, which is the third one on the list is that the performer of the evil act believes, it is done for higher good. The ones who perform this evil very often believe that their acts can be justified and that they constitute the good. When the actor of action does

²⁵ *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, s.v. "Evil," accessed March 8, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/evil>.

²⁶ Gn 4:1-9

²⁷ Ez 28:15-17

²⁸ Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Evil*, trans. Kerri A. Pierce (London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), 7-20.

not really think about whether his acts are good or evil. Can arise, as someone's unconscious mistake.²⁹

Ronald Paulson says that the fundament of evil can be divided into two categories – Suffering Evil and Doing Evil. While suffering evil the target witnesses and experiences horrifying actions, which are either of natural causes such as earthquake or flood, or actions caused by human beings such as murder or robbery. On the other hand, doing evil in acting immorally, selfishly, controlling and cruel and enjoying pain and despair of others.³⁰

In literature and narrative in general, the evil characters, usually the antagonist of the story are called Villains, and one way how to look at them is through psychology and psychoanalysis. This helps to distinguish the difference between internal and external features of the character because as it very often is, one can be completely distinct outside that is inside. While looking at the inner characteristic search for unaware longings and prerequisites, displayed intentions and principals. On the other hand, outer Villain would spare reliance and directness.³¹

²⁹Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Evil*, 86.

³⁰Ronald Paulson, *Sin and Evil: Moral Values in Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 2-3.

³¹Anna Fahraeus and Dikmen Yakah Camoglu, *Villains and Villainy: Embodiments of Evil in Literature, Popular Culture and Media* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 8-20.

4 EVIL IN MIDDLE-EARTH

In Tolkien's work, we can observe a constant and never-ending battle between evil and good and in Middle-earth the vision of evil pretty clear. The main antagonist in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is depicted as Lord Sauron, the Dark Lord. The one to whom creatures and animals serve and everyone is scared of. Although in the Third Age, Sauron's entity is embodied only in the Eye and in the Ring, still many creatures succumb to his power and some, to the power of the Ring itself. Referring to evil, Tolkien uses throughout his work the words wraith and shadow. The term Shadow is used repeatedly evoking darkness, evil and sin.

“That name the hobbits only knew in legends of the dark past, like a shadow in the background of their memories; but it was ominous and disquieting. It seemed that the evil power in Mirkwood had been driven out by the White Council only to reappear in greater strength in the old strongholds of Mordor.”³²

As demonstrated above the snippet from *The Fellowship of the Ring* illustrates, how is the shadow an equivalent for Lord Sauron and everything evil that succumb to his powers, including the land of Mordor.³³ Tolkien in his work, understands evil, as the dearth of light, or good.³⁴ The appellation wraith is predominantly arrogated to Nazgûls, the nine riders under the power of Lord Sauron and the One Ring which are very often addressed as the black riders. Shapeless creatures, which disseminate fear and evil and are entitled as Ringwraith. In case of Nazgûls, transformation into the wraiths happened after accepting the rings of power from Lord Sauron.³⁵ Meaning of the word wraith is something evil and ghoulish, that had been inveigled from its journey and had lost its original form and by wraith Tolkien again refers to evil that rules throughout Middle-earth.³⁶ It is important to say that the black shadows are not the only character to be called wraiths in Middle-earth. After one of the Nazgûls injured Frodo in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gandalf said to him:

“They tried to pierce your heart with a Morgul-knife which remains in the wound. If they had succeeded, you would have become like they are, only weaker and under their command. You would have become

³² John R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (HarperCollins e-books, 2008), 57.

³³ Tom A. Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien Author of the Century* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 128-130.

³⁴ Drout, *Tolkiens Encyclopedie*, 107.

³⁵ “Identity and Origins of the Nazgûl,” A Tolkien's Perspective, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://atolkienistperspective.wordpress.com/2014/02/20/identity-and-origins-of-the-nazgul/>.

³⁶ Shippey, *Author of the Century*, 123-124.

a wraith under the dominion of the Dark Lord; and he would have tormented you for trying to keep his Ring if any greater torment were possible than being robbed of it and seeing it on his hand.”³⁷

As seen above, the power of Nazgûl’s weapon has the ability to slowly turn the victim into the wraith, even though it is not the only possibility how to become one. Men turned themselves into wraiths by accepting gifts from the Dark Lord and using those gifts for the purpose they believed was right. But after misapplying of the power given to them, they have lost the substance of humanity and therefore become a wraith.³⁸

Another example are the Ring-bearers. The Master Ring was created by the Dark Lord himself and could not be used for any good. After being stolen from his master, its only desire, was to get back to him and the only way the Ring could have attained that was to control and influence his current owner.³⁹ For instance, Sméagol. Came from a nation similar to hobbits but after the power of the Ring has affected him, Sméagol became a creature with a dual entity, where one of them still retained a part of his humanity and the other one only coved for the Ring.⁴⁰ Frodo as the carrier of the Ring has been influenced by it through the time, he had to carry this burden. His mind and soul were fading away and the Ring started to take control of him. Under the power of the Ring and Lord Sauron Sméagol has become and Frodo began to arise a wraith.⁴¹

4.1 Augustinian view of evil

According to Scott A. Davidson “Evil is like a darkness of the shadow: light is necessary for the darkness to exist, but shadows are not necessary for the light to exist.”⁴² This concept is intermingling throughout the history of Arda. Tolkien understands evil in the Augustinian perception which says, that evil is caused by the absence of good.⁴³ This concept offers a view that nothing and no one is pure evil and that everything that was created, even the evil characters, were initially good. Every character that was born or created had given preconditions to behave good and honorable and their evil and twisted attributes were whether straightened or weakened during the life. In *The Silmarillion* the pressure on the

³⁷ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 318.

³⁸ Shippey, *Author of the Century*, 125.

³⁹ Drout, *Tolkiens Encyclopedie*, 484.

⁴⁰ Tolkien, *Fellowship*, 69-71.

⁴¹ John R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (HarperCollins e-books, 2009), 222.

⁴² Gregory Bassham and Eric Bronson, *The Lord of the Rings: one book to rule them all*, (Chicago: Open Court, 2003) 102.

⁴³ Aurelius Augustin, *Vyznání* (Praha, 1926), 76.

evil characters mostly came from a persuasion, coercion or jealousy and dark thoughts. Later on, in *The Lord of the Rings*, had the most controlling and convincing powers the One Ring and its master Lord Sauron.

The first sign of evil that emerged in Tolkien's world appeared when Melkor encored his own twisted and jealous thoughts into the Great Music, which Ainur created according to the thoughts of Eru. Even though Melkor was created as one of the Holy Ones, with the vocation of doing good, his envy of Eru has turn him on the side of evil.⁴⁴ His most loyal servant and his lieutenant was Sauron, originally Maiar of Aulë. Melkor turned him on his evil side and Sauron became of faithful minion, which stood behind him and had a massive share in Melkor's acts in Middle-earth. After Melkor's fall, Sauron emerged to be his successor and became Dark Lord himself. Although Orcs seem to have evil rooted in them through and through, they were bred from the Elves, the Children of Ilúvatar. Melkor captured few Elves and enslaved them, by torture and his evil acts. Orcs became loyal servants of Melkor and after his fall, servants of Sauron. In all these examples is visible, that even the most wicked characters are created with preconditions for being good and only the inner power and persuasion has twisted them off the side of evil.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ John.R.R.Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, (HarperCollins ebooks, 1977) 4.

⁴⁵ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 39.

5 RELIGION

There is no doubt about Tolkien's strong relationship with Christianity and religion. After his father's death, Ronald's mother had, despite strong disagreement from her family joined the Catholic church and so did Tolkien and his younger brother. Death of Tolkien's mother Mabel has deeply struck him since he was only 12 years old, and he tried to find consolation in his faith. Massive impact on him had also Fr. Francis Xavier Morgen, called Father Francis, a friend of their deceased mother who took care of the boys after she passed away.⁴⁶

5.1 Biblical figures

Even though it might appear, that Tolkien's work is full of Christian allegory he himself strongly denies it. Tolkien says

"I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory', but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author."⁴⁷

In one of his letters to Stanley Unwin, where he talks about writing a sequel to the *Hobbit*, Tolkien emphasizes, that *The Lord of the Rings* is definitely "not an allegory."⁴⁸ Despite both of this information, in a letter to Robert Murrays, S.J. Tolkien admitted, that after further and repeated reading, *The Lord of the Ring* is work with Catholic and religious elements, which were inserted unconsciously but their occurrence is indubitable.⁴⁹

Looking at the first lines in *The Holy Bible* and in *The Silmarillion* some similarities might be observed. Even though there is no concept of worshipping Christian God in Middle-earth, Eru carries formulaic properties and attributes as him. Eru, Iluvatar or the One, is same as the Christian God, first one to be mentioned before anyone else. He possesses the ability to create the world out of nothing, only from the power of his mind. From his thoughts, Eru formed the Ainur, the saint, to whom he introduced a theme and told them, to create a Great

⁴⁶ Carpenter, *A Biography*, 31-33.

⁴⁷ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 28.

⁴⁸" John R.R. Tolkien, "#34 To Stanley Unwin", *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, eds. Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

⁴⁹ Tolkien, "#42 To Michael Tolkien", *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*.

Music. As Eru told them, they composed and sang and out of their music, the world Arda was created.⁵⁰

“But when they came into the Void, Ilúvatar said to them: ‘Behold your Music!’ And he showed them a vision, giving to them sight where before was only hearing; and they saw a new World made visible before them, and it was globed amid the Void, and it was sustained therein, but was not of it. And as they looked and wondered this World began to unfold its history, and it seemed to them that it lived and grew.”⁵¹

Tolkien’s equivalent of a biblical Satan is in *The Silmarillion* named Melkor, later on called Morgoth. The mightiest of the Ainur same as Lucifer the highest of archangels. Both of them began to corrupt their powers to engross other entities for their own purpose.⁵² During the creation of the Great Music, Melkor as the greatest of the Ainur began to entwine disharmony and mismatch into the music, since he desired power and fame. Melkor was one of the Ainur, now called the Valar, send to create Arda a prepare arrival of Ilúvatar’s children, Elves and Men. But the jealousy was eating him alive, he desired to enslave the Children and be worshiped as the One. For his evil and wicked deeds Melkor was expelled from the Valar same as Satan, the fallen angel, was expelled from Heaven.⁵³

5.2 Recurrence

In Tolkien’s world, the phenomena of recurrence transpire. There is no clear mark of the beginning and of the end of the Third Age occurs in *The Lord of the Rings*. Still, the audience is spurred to contemplate about the historical and future aspects. For example, where did the inhabitants of Middle-earth, such as Wizzards, Elfs or Ents came from and what did they experienced long before *the LOTR* was set or what is going to happened with Frodo and Gandaf leaving with Elfs at the end of the trilogy. In *the Bible*, the phenomenon of Recurrence appears in the form of fall and redemption. As mentioned above, Lucifer fell from Heaven and became known as the fallen angel or later on as Satan. In Arda, the motif

⁵⁰ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 3-4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵² Michael D.C. Drout, *J.R.R. Tolkiens Encyclopedie: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 435-436.

of falling is also projected by evil creatures, such as in *the Bible*. Sauron falls for Melkor, being with similar features as Satan, and becomes his loyal servant. After Melkor's fall, Sauron replaces his spot and Saruman falls for him to be his staunch helper. Redeemer from the view of Christianity is pictured through Christ's self-abnegating redeem and in *The Lord of the Rings*, the figures with the same attributes are Gandalf and Frodo. Both of them sacrifice for the sake of other characters. Another example of recurrence is found in the eras of Arda itself. When one Age is coming to an end a huge battle takes place and the evil is defeated and then the new Age begins.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Diane Speed, "Christian Perspectives in The Lord of the Rings," *Sydney Open Journals Online*, no. 30 (2004): 79-88, <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/SSE/article/viewFile/581/550>.

6 THE KEY EVIL CHARACTERS

This chapter is devoted to the main evil and wicked characters in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy whose origins sometimes encroach upon *The Silmarillion*. The essential purpose is to adumbrate the birth of Lord Sauron, the Dark Lord of Middle-earth and creation of the other evil characters which succumb to his power and how the One Ring affects them.

6.1 Sauron

In the language of Quenya the name Sauron stands for "The Abhorred".⁵⁵ Although Lord Sauron is predominantly known as the main antagonist in the Third Age in Middle-earth the roots of his creation and life reach way back to the First Age into the creation of Arda. As mentioned in chapter 4.1 Tolkien perceives evil in the Augustinian conception as an absence of good. According to this theory, God created everything and everyone good with good preconditions. This model also accompanies the creation of Sauron.⁵⁶

The character of Melkor (Morgoth) is vital for understanding the development of Lord Sauron himself. Morgoth was created by Eru as one of the Holy Ones called The Ainur and his vocation was to create Arda and look after the Children of Ilúvatar. His jealousy and anger dragged him towards the evil side and caused his fall. Sauron was originally the Maiar of Aulë, one of the spirits and helpers, which came to Arda with Valar. Melkor managed to corrupt Sauron and he became his most loyal servant which was apart of all actions of Melkor in Arda. He became his lieutenant and was known in the Sindarin language as Gorthaur the Cruel.⁵⁷

Since both Valar and Maiar were spirits, they did not have any particular form or shape. They could however, choose their appearance. Valar took on them the appearance and the look they saw in Ilúvatar's perception of Arda, and the same goes with the Maiar. This ability was a powerful tool for Sauron. Thereafter Melkor was defeated in the War of Wrath, Sauron was left as the strongest and the most terrible evil power in Middle-earth and his goal was to become its ruler. Sauron took advantage of his ability to change his form and he altered himself into a beautiful character. His main corruptive force was whispering, advising and currying favors to the Children of Ilúvatar, whereby he manipulated them to act according

⁵⁵ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 316.

⁵⁶ Drout, *Tolkiens Encyclopedie*, 591.

⁵⁷ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 35-36.

to his volition.⁵⁸ Sauron called himself Annatar “Lord of Gifts” while he used his corruptive powers to control Eldar during the Second Age.⁵⁹ After the Downfall of Númenor, which was caused by Sauron, the ability to change his substance according to his will was taken away from Sauron and he could never appear nice and beautiful to people.⁶⁰ Since Sauron could not transform into a beautiful character anymore his tactics of nice and sneaky behavior was no longer an option. His appearance was now terrifying, dark and evil and his power consisted in spreading fear and ire.⁶¹

During the Second Age when Melkor was no longer a threat to Arda, Sauron yearned to become the ruler of Middle-earth and subdue all free nations and inhabitants living in it. In cooperation with Elves smiths, Sauron created the Rings of Power and gave to the Elves, the Dwarfs, and the Mortal Men.⁶² Because Sauron was sordid and the only reason for his generous gifts was gaining the power, Sauron created One Ring for himself. The One Ring to whom all the other Rings of Powers succumb and while wearing it Sauron felt and knew everything that the lesser rings have performed but more importantly he could control the Ring-Bearers. As mentioned in *The Silmarillion* "And much of the strength and will of Sauron passed into that One Ring; for the power of the Elven-rings was very great, and that which should govern them must be a thing of surpassing potency."⁶³ However, after the Elves found out what Sauron's intentions are, they took off their rings. Though the rings namely Narya, Neva and Vilva were under the power of the One Ring, Elves were able to hide them from Sauron and all three of them stayed pure because Sauron's hand has never touched them.⁶⁴

At the end of the Second Age, Sauron was defeated in the Battle of Dagorlad where Men and Elves joined together to defeat the Dark Lord. Isildur cut off the One Ring from Sauron's hand with Narsil and even though Isildur had the chance to destroy the Ring and kill Sauron's entity once for all, he took the Ring for himself.⁶⁵ It is said in *The Silmarillion* “Then Sauron was for that time vanquished, and he forsook his body, and his spirit fled far

⁵⁸ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 269.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 298.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 267.

⁶¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 57.

⁶² Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 271.

⁶³ Ibid., 271.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 299.

⁶⁵ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 316-317.

away and hid in waste places; and he took no visible shape again for many long years.”⁶⁶ Though Sauron was defeated, he was not dead and since part of his soul was hidden in the One Ring he could not gain enough strength to arise.

In the Third Age is Sauron’s entity illustrated as the Eye.

“But last night I told you of Sauron the Great, the Dark Lord. The rumours that you have heard are true: he has indeed arisen again and left his hold in Mirkwood and returned to his ancient fastness in the Dark Tower of Mordor. That name even you hobbits have heard of, like a shadow on the borders of old stories. Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again.”

This was the first time Gandalf spoke about the Dark Lord in the *LOTR* trilogy while explaining Frodo who is their enemy and whose ring is Frodo now possessing.⁶⁷ As it is known from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, after his defeat in Mordor, Sauron vanished and hid himself. But his power and existence are conditioned by the One Ring therefor Sauron needs to possess the Ring again to gain his full strength and conquer Middle-earth.⁶⁸ The Eye of Sauron, also called as the Red Eye⁶⁹, Lidless Eye⁷⁰, the Eye of Mordor⁷¹ and the Eye of Barad-dûr⁷² is described as “The Eye was rimmed with fire, but was itself glazed, yellow as a cat’s, watchful and intent, and the black slit of its pupil opened on a pit, a window into nothing.” and its only desire it to find the One Ring.⁷³ The Eye impersonates the entity and power of Lord Sauron but although it is not used as a “weapon” to warfare the Eye spreads fear and torment all over Middle-earth.⁷⁴ Thereafter Pippin looks into the Orthanc-stone and Frodo into The Mirror of Galadriel both of them meet with the entity of Lord Sauron which tortures and hurts them. In Pippin’s case, Sauron directly speaks to him and Pippin describes the feeling to Gandalf as “It was like being stabbed with knives.”⁷⁵ In the Mirror Frodo beholds the picture of Sauron’s Eye wildly searching for him and the One Ring he was carrying on his neck.⁷⁶

⁶⁶ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 304.

⁶⁷ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 67.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁶⁹ John R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1988), 4.

⁷⁰ John R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (HarperCollins e-books, 2009), 89.

⁷¹ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 70.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 139.

⁷³ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 474.

⁷⁴ Edward Lense, “Sauron is Watching You: The Role of the Great Eye in *The Lord of the Rings*,” *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* 4, no. 1 (September 1976): 3-6, <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1476&context=mythlore>.

⁷⁵ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 239.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 473.

Although during the Third Age Sauron had no physical entity and appearance except for the Lidless Eye he spread fear all over Middle-earth with the help of his loyal servants. The most numerous of them were the Orcs, initially bred by Melkor during the First Age.⁷⁷ One of his loyal minions was Saruman, a wizard which got corrupted by Sauron's power and by the power of the One Ring. In the Isengard Saruman created Uruk-hai, his own breed of orcs which also fought and worked for Sauron.⁷⁸ The scariest of his dogsbodies were the Nazgûls, a Men by origin but after the acceptance of the nine Rings of Power they fell under the power of Sauron.⁷⁹ Since the essence of Sauron being is in the One Ring he cannot gain full strength and his psychical form without it.

“The Captains bowed their heads; and when they looked up again, behold! their enemies were flying and the power of Mordor was scattering like dust in the wind. As when death smites the swollen brooding thing that inhabits their crawling hill and holds them all in sway, ants will wander witless and purposeless and then feebly die, so the creatures of Sauron, orc or troll or beast spellenslaved, ran hither and thither mindless; and some slew themselves, or cast themselves in pits, or fled wailing back to hide in holes and dark lightless places far from hope. But the Men of Rhûn and of Harad, Easterling and Southron, saw the ruin of their war and the great majesty and glory of the Captains of the West. And those that were deepest and longest in evil servitude, hating the West, and yet were men proud and bold, in their turn now gathered themselves for a last stand of desperate battle. But the most part fled eastward as they could; and some cast their weapons down and sued for mercy.”

And as said in *The Return of the King*, after Frodo threw the Ring into the fires of Mount Doom, everything connected with the Dark Lord perished and his servants disappeared or ran away.⁸⁰

6.2 The Ring

The Ring of Lord Sauron is vital for the whole *Lord of the Rings* story and the entire plot revolves around it.

“Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,

⁷⁷ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 39.

⁷⁸ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 28.

⁷⁹ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 300.

⁸⁰ Tolkien, *The Return*, 216-217.

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.”⁸¹

This quote briefly explains the order and meaning of the twenty Rings of Power. These were forged somewhere between the years 1500 and 1590 SA by Elven-smiths and Lord Sauron. Even though they were given to their lords as gifts, Sauron aimed to control minds and know about the acts of their possessors.⁸² Sauron secretly forged one ring for himself. The Master Ring was created in the heat of Mount Doom and it was the only place, where the Ring could have been destroyed. The Elven-kings detected Sauron’s plan, hid the three Rings they received and never worn them again, as long as Sauron possessed the One Ring. Seven rings were given to the Dwarf-lords which used the Rings only to gain more wealth and gold but thanks to their stubbornness and obstinacy Sauron could never fully control the Ring-bearers. The nine rings were given to the Mortal Men which were the only ones who exploited the full power over them and fell under the domination of Lord Sauron.⁸³

“As for Bilbo Baggins, even while he was making his speech, he had been fingering the golden ring in his pocket: his magic ring that he had kept secret for so many years. As he stepped down he slipped it on his finger, and he was never seen by any hobbit in Hobbiton again.”

This is the first mention of the Ring which a reader finds in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when Bilbo Baggins demonstrates its power and effect of him and short after leaves his treasure to his nephew Frodo.⁸⁴ Sauron’s Ring also called the One Ring⁸⁵, the Ruling Ring⁸⁶ and also Isildur’s Bane⁸⁷. After Isildur stole the One Ring from Sauron he lost it for hundreds of years and after Sméagol took possession of it, he hid himself from the sight to the Misty Mountains. Therefore Sauron thought the Ring is lost and no one found it but in *The Fellowship of the Ring* Gandalf says "But he knows now that it has not perished, that it has been found." while explaining Frodo the story about Sauron, the Ring and about the evil and danger that is about to come, if he will not destroy the Ring.⁸⁸

Even though the Ring is an unliving object his meaning, actions and importance make him an independent character. According to Hayden Head “the Ring has no power unless it

⁸¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 66.

⁸² Drout, *Tolkiens Encyclopedie*, 572.

⁸³ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 289-291.

⁸⁴ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 41.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 317.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

is possessed”.⁸⁹ This claim is confirmed when after Isildur lost the Ring in the River no one found the Ring for centuries, it has been inactive. But after his founder took him and appropriated the Ring it began to influence him.⁹⁰ It is also known that the vocation of the Ring is to get into his only rightful owner, Lord Sauron. The Ring has the ability to awake “selfishness” in the Ring-bearers but also in people around the Ring by tempting their inner desires which they could reach by using the Ring.⁹¹

On the ones who carry the Isildur's Bane has the Ring most tremendous impact and the longer they possess it, the worse. For Gollum the Ring became his obsession, changed him mentally and physically. In Frodo's case influence of the Ring is more visible the longer he carries the burden and approaches to Mordor but its power is so strong that even shortly after Frodo gets the Ring in his possession, it is very difficult for him to let go and throw it into the fire as Gandalf asked him to do so.

“But he found now that he could not do so, not without a great struggle. He weighed the Ring in his hand, hesitating, and forcing himself to remember all that Gandalf had told him; and then with an effort of will he made a movement, as if to cast it away – but he found that he had put it back in his pocket.”⁹²

It is visible how does the Ring affect Frodo more and more throughout the trilogy. “Stand away Don't touch me!” he cried. “It is mine. I say. Be off!” is one of the examples when the Ring takes over Frodo's mind and controls him.⁹³ Frodo knew that the usage of the Ring is unsafe because while wearing in on his finger Sauron felt where the Ring is and it attracted his attention to the Ring-bearer he gave in to the temptation three times. The first time Frodo gave in was during the attack of the Black Riders on the Weathertop. The fear of the Ringwraiths, loyal servants of Lord Sauron was stronger than Halglings will and so he put on the Ring.⁹⁴ Another temptation came when Frodo felt threatened by one of his friends, Boromir to be precise. Although during the council of Elrond was cleared out that the Rings power cannot be used as a war force to beat its owner Lord Sauron Boromir has troubled understanding it and what more, why should a small weak creature as hobbit carry such

⁸⁹ Hayden Head, “Imitative Desire in Tolkien's Mythology: A Girardian Perspective,” *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 137-147, <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1228&context=mythlore>.

⁹⁰ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 67.

⁹¹ Gwenth Hood, “Sauron and Dracula,” *Mythlore*, no. 52 (Winter 1987): 11-16, http://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=english_faculty.

⁹² Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 78-79.

⁹³ Tolkien, *The Return*, 204.

⁹⁴ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 255.

unique object.⁹⁵ Boromir's desire for the Ring was so strong that at the end of the Fellowship of the Ring Boromir uses physical strength to steal the Ring from Frodo. His only possibility to run away from much stronger Boromir was to put on the Ring and become invisible.⁹⁶ In the previous two cases Frodo misused the power of the Ring out of fear but the last time he put on the Ring out of pure selfishness. During the last stage of Frodo's quest, right before the Ring is about to be destroyed in the Mount Doom, his desire for the Ring overwhelmed Frodo and he wanted to keep the Ring for himself rather than destroy it. "I have come, he said. But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!"⁹⁷

Not only the Ring succumb to the power of Lord Sauron it is possible to say that the Ring can make its own decisions.⁹⁸ Gandalf said "It had slipped from Isildur's hand and betrayed him"⁹⁹ or "it shrank or expanded in an odd way, and might suddenly slip off a finger where it had been tight"¹⁰⁰. It is indubitable that the One Ring had the power to act from its free will and help itself to get into the possession of his only Master.

6.3 Sméagol

The character of Sméagol or Gollum accompanies the reader throughout the whole *LOTR* trilogy. Sméagol is a creation born as a special breed of hobbits called Stoor. On his birthday, he and his close friend Déagol went fishing and after Deágol lost a fight with a fish and fell into the pot, he surfaced from the water with a golden ring. Smeágol got jealous of his finding and demanded the ring for himself as a birthday present and since Deágol refused to give up the ring, Sméagol strangled him. From that point, he became a Ring-bearer of the One Ring whose owner is Lord Sauron. Smeágol very quickly found out that the ring can make him invisible and he used its power for cheating and acting evil, which got him excluded from the society. The power of the Ring changed Smeágol into entirely different creature both physically and mentally, and as a result of this transformation, he was renamed Gollum. The Ring caused division of his personality into two separate personas with similar aspects as a schizophrenic person has. After his exclusion from the society, Gollum settled down in the

⁹⁵ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 317.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 521.

⁹⁷ Tolkien, *The Return*, 213.

⁹⁸ Hood, "Sauron and Dracula," 14-16.

⁹⁹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 73.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

Misty mountains, hidden away from people, creatures and the daily light.¹⁰¹ Misty mountains is a place where Smeágol met Bilbo Bagins from the Shire and where the hobbit stole the Ring from Gollum.¹⁰² Since that moment, Gollum's only desire was to find his precious, as he liked to call him and his desire and obsession with the Ring even forced him to leave his hideaway and search for it.¹⁰³

As mentioned above, Gollum went through several changes inflicted by the power of the Ring, which became his addiction and obsession. The most significant change that can be observed is a division of his personality. One part of his self is called Sméagol, the other one is called Gollum and both of his personalities are in a constant dispute. Sméagol seems to be pure-minded with maintaining properties of a hobbit he used to be. The example is found when Sméagol feels obligated to keep his promise to Frodo and to lead him to Mordor.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Gollum possesses all the bad characteristics such as envy and jealousy. He is wretched, lonely and continuously consumed by a desire of the Ring and his only purpose is to take possession of "his precious."¹⁰⁵

“I don't know. I can't help it. Master's got it. Sméagol promised to help the master.” ‘Yes, yes, to help the master: the master of the Precious. But if we was master, then we could help ourselves, yes, and still keep promises.’ ‘But Sméagol said he would be very very good. Nice hobbit! He took cruel rope off Sméagol's leg. He speaks nicely to me.’ ‘Very very good, eh, my precious? Let's be good, good as fish, sweet one, but to ourselves. Not hurt the nice hobbit, of course, no, no’”

Since both of his personalities are trying to have supremacy over the other one, an endless battle continues between them.¹⁰⁶

Smeágol and his strong relationship with the One Ring is vital to the whole trilogy. Since he helped Frodo and Sam to transfer the Ring to Mordor and Frodo could have successfully destroyed the Ring in the Mount Doom and therefore the creator his creator Lord Sauron was defeated.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 66-70.

¹⁰² John R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (HarperCollins e-books, 1991), 104.

¹⁰³ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 75-76.

¹⁰⁴ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 162.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory Bassham and Eric Bronson, *The Lord of the Rings: one book to rule them all*, (Chicago: Open Court, 2003) 9.

¹⁰⁶ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 172-173.

¹⁰⁷ Tolkien, *The Return*, 213-214.

6.4 Nazgûls

Nazgûls, also called the Ringwraiths¹⁰⁸, Black Riders¹⁰⁹ or the Nine are the direst servants of Lord Sauron mainly known from *The Lord of the Ring* trilogy. The Ringwraiths were originally nine Men than received the Nine Rings of Power from Lord Sauron, together with Elves and Dwarfs. Elves were able to predict Sauron's plan to enslave all nations in Middle-earth and took off their Rings, Dwarfs were too stubborn and the Rings had no effect on them, maybe just intensified their desire for gold. Men were the easiest to be enslaved by the Dark Lord. This is how the creation of the Ringwraiths is described in *The Silmarillion*.

“Men proved easier to ensnare. Those who used the Nine Rings became mighty in their day, kings, sorcerers, and warriors of old. They obtained glory and great wealth, yet it turned to their undoing. They had as it seemed, unending life, yet life became unendurable to them. They could walk, if they would, unseen by all eyes in this world beneath the sun, and they could see things in worlds invisible to mortal men; but too often they beheld only the phantoms and delusions of Sauron. And one by one, sooner or later, according to their native strength and to the good or evil of their wills in the beginning, they fell under the thralldom of the ring that they bore and under the domination of the One, which was Sauron's. And they became for ever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows. The Nazgûl were they, the Ringwraiths, the Enemy's most terrible servants; darkness went with them, and they cried with the voice of death.”¹¹⁰

In *The Lord of the Rings* the Ringwraiths have predominantly only one mission; to search for the Ruling Ring after which their master yearns. Once again, the pattern of turning something predominantly good and by outer influences changing it into something evil occurs. Nazgûls were probably the most suitable for this mission since their loyalty to Lord Sauron was unconditional.¹¹¹ They first appear in *The Fellowship of the Ring* as the Black Riders on the black horses searching for Frodo on his quest from the Shire.¹¹² By the time Frodo met them he had no idea how big of a threat and how dangerous are they until it had been clarified to him by Gandalf.

“Yes, I knew of them. Indeed I spoke of them once to you; for the Black Riders are the Ringwraiths, the Nine Servants of the Lord of the Rings. But I did not know that they had arisen again or I should have fled with you at once.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 300.

¹⁰⁹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 99.

¹¹⁰ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 299.

¹¹¹ John R.R. Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales of Numeron and Middle-Earth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 352.

¹¹² Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 103.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 287.

Although the Ringwraiths first appeared as the Black Rider on the black horses later on, as the story continued, they began to use another form of transportation and that on flying monsters which Gandalf calls "the winged steeds".¹¹⁴ The flying beasts enhanced Nazgûl's velocity of their movement across Middle-earth while fulfilling their hunt for the Ring.

The Nazgûls are very often described and connected with the words shadow or a wraith. As mentioned in chapter 4, these terms are used by Tolkien to refer to evil which strives to rule Middle-earth. In case of the Ringwraiths the word shadow refers to the real shadow, the flying monster leaves under itself while flying, but shadow relates also to the evil which they and the Dark Lord presents.¹¹⁵ The word wraith refers to something that has lost its physical form and therefore, it is the perfect designation for Nazgûls. The Rings of Power were created as a tool for Sauron to enslave its owners so consequently after the Nine fell under the power of Lord Sauron and the One Ring they faded away, lost their shade, became invisible and undead. Their appearance is described as shapeless creatures, dressed in black coats and boots with "showed and invisible faces"¹¹⁶ After the Nine attacked Frodo and his retinue at the Weathertop Gandalf's explanation of their resemblance to Frodo, which was confused by the existence and form of the Riders and their horses was "Because they are real horses; just as the black robes are real robes that they wear to give shape to their nothingness when they have dealings with the living."¹¹⁷ When Frodo put on the Ring at the Weathertop he was able to actually see the figures, without the robes but this time as a creature with a shape.¹¹⁸ The reason for that, according to Bill Davis is that by putting on the One Ring, Frodo got himself into the world of the undead. "The Ringwraiths are horrific because they are undead: they are not dead, and for them not dying is a curse."¹¹⁹

6.5 Saruman

Although in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy Saruman represents lesser evil and threat than the Dark Lord Sauron, he still awakes constant fear and in the whole fellowship of the Ring, which accompanies Frodo on his quest.

"Even as the first shadows were felt in Mirkwood there appeared in the west of Middle-earth the Istari, whom Men called the Wizards. None knew at that time whence they were, save Círdan of the

¹¹⁴ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 69.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 69.

¹¹⁶ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 98.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 289.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 255.

¹¹⁹ Bassham and Bronson, *one book*, 125.

Havens, and only to Elrond and to Galadriel did he reveal that they came over the Sea. But afterward, it was said among the Elves that they were messengers sent by the Lords of the West to contest the power of Sauron, if he should arise again, and to move Elves and Men and all living things of good will to valiant deeds. In the likeness of Men they appeared, old but vigorous, and they changed little with the years, and aged but slowly, though great cares lay on them; great wisdom they had, and many powers of mind and hand. Long they journeyed far and wide among Elves and Men, and held converse also with beasts and with birds; and the peoples of Middle-earth gave to them many names, for their true names they did not reveal. Chief among them were those whom the Elves called Mithrandir and Curunír, but Men in the North named Gandalf and Saruman. Of these Curunír was the eldest and came first, and after him came Mithrandir and Radagast, and others of the Istari who went into the east of Middle-earth, and do not come into these tales.”

This is how Saruman’s first appearance is described in *The Silmarillion*. As seen in chapter 7.1, Lord Sauron was initially the Maiar. Saruman, same as him, belongs to the Maiar, which were sent to Middle-earth by the Valar and belonged to the Istari. As the Wizards were able to take on themselves any form they wanted as all Maiar and Valar could, they took on the human form to be easily accepted by the Elves and the Men.¹²⁰ As Istari’s main goal was to protect the Men and the Elves from Sauron, when the shadow began to return to Middle-earth, and fear of Sauron’s return began to rise, the White Council was formed. As Saruman the White was considered as the “great among the Wise”¹²¹ and he studied Sauron very thoroughly, he became the head of the Council which Gandalf, Elron, Círdan and Galadriel were a part too.¹²² Even though the Council was terrified of Sauron’s return, Saruman kept reassuring them the Dark Lord is no longer a threat to them and to Middle-earth for the Isildur’s Bane was lost and nowhere to be found. But Saruman was sneaky, he was aware of his strength and power and spend plenty of time with studying everything about the Dark Lord and the Rings of Power. His pride and envy grew inside of him and eventually, the desire for the Ruling Ring overpowered him. He wanted to take possession of the One Ring to rule it as he was jealous of Sauron’s power. The plan was to let the Ring seek for his master and to seize him before his true master would ut as Sauron’s power grew, the Council had to take actions.¹²³ Although Saruman was making plans about acquiring the Ring, the Council, the fellowship and almost no one in the whole Middle-earth had a clue about his plans and believed, Saruman is on the side of good and wants to conquer

¹²⁰ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 309-310.

¹²¹ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 63.

¹²² Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 309-310.

¹²³ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 326-328.

Sauron and destroy the Ring. At least not until Gandalf's arrival to the Isengrad and to the Orthanc tower, where Saruman had his punch. At that moment, Saruman revealed his plan to Gandalf. "I said we, for we it may be, if you will join with me. A new Power is rising." "Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends." Saruman was aware of Gandalf's powers and he did not consider him as a weak competition on the contrary he wished for his help to find the Ring, overthrow the Dark Lord and to gain domination over Middle-earth and its inhabitants.¹²⁴

Though it might seem Sauron's defeat is White Wizard's only quest, he is actually one of Sauron's loyal servants. As a part of his army, Saruman bred the Uruk-hai. Dark breed of strapping orcs from Isengrad which even though considered Saruman as their leader fought in Sauron's battles alongside his orcs and other loyal minions.¹²⁵ But how did Saruman eventually end up on the side of the Dark Lord. The find of one of the Palaniri was proved to be fatal for him. As the White wizard moved to the Isengrad and occupied the Orthanc tower he found the Orthanc-stone. Orthanc-stone was one of the Palantiri created by the Noldor many time ago as a device for communication between its owners, but they also worked as a crystal ball for glancing into the future and into the past. Saruman kept the stone as a secret for everyone to misuse its power for his own sake, search in the future and the past. Unfortunately for him, he strayed into Barad-dür during one of his quests and encountered with the Dark Lord himself and as mentioned above in chapter 7.1, resist to Sauron and do not succumb to his powers while standing almost face to face to him is a merely impossible task. Consequently, the Orthanc-stone caused Saruman's subduction to the Dark Lord.¹²⁶ Although there is no doubt about Saruman's strength and his magical power, one of his most powerful tools is his voice. While dispersing Saruman's army in Isengrad, Gandalf himself warns his companions against Saruman to "Be aware of his voice." Since Saruman is a wizard, many would expect that he would use his voice to bewitch his enemies and control them with his magic power. But the opposite is true. Tolkien himself claimed that the emphasis on Saruman's voice is not because of its magical powers, but

¹²⁴ Tolkien, *The Fellowship*, 338.

¹²⁵ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 28.

¹²⁶ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 146-148.

because of the White Wizard's oratorical abilities. Simply said, Saruman's usage of the language was one of his powerful tools to manipulate with the inhabitants of Middle-earth.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Jay Ruud, "The Voice of Saruman: Wizards and Rhetoric in The Two Towers," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* 28, no. 3 (Spring/Summer 2010): 141-143, <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.cz/&httpsredir=1&article=1175&context=mythlore>.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this theses was to understand J.R.R Tolkien's perception of evil which influenced him while creating his best-known and most influential works, namely *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. The main part of this thesis contains the analysis of the most wicked and evil characters, mainly within *the LOTR* trilogy, with the focus on Lord Sauron. As Tolkien got strongly influenced by the Catholic faith at a fairly young age his belief formed him and his perception of world and evil. Tolkien perceived evil in the Augustinian view of evil where St. Augustine understood evil as a lack of good. This approach touts a view on a creation of evil characters by saying, that everyone and everything is born good, pure, as the tabula rasa. Only by pressuring and awakening individuals hidden and undeveloped features such as jealousy, pride desire for power one might become evil and join the dark side.

The main antagonist and the most wicked character in *the LOTR* trilogy is depicted as Lord Sauron whose creation reaches way back into the First Age of Arda, which is described in *The Silmarillion*. Though Sauron is pictured as the strongest evil power in Middle-earth, Sauron was originally Valar, spirit with positive and good aptitudes, which got corrupted by Melkor, the most powerful Maiar who sat on the throne of the Dark Lord way before Sauron did. As it is evident, Tolkien structured the creation of Sauron precisely according to the Augustinian way. And not only Lord Sauron but all other evil characters in the narrative which have in common not only good and pure origin but at the same time, they all succumb under the domination of the Dark Lord. The analysis shows that all evil characters, especially in the *LOTR* trilogy, are subjecting to Sauron and are his loyal servants. Whether out of fear, favour of his actions or their desire for the One Ring, which had the power to control its Ring-bearer and awake desperate craving for it in others. Let's look and Saruman for instance, born as a wizard to protect people, Elves and fight against Sauron. But his desire for power and Sauron's Ring pulled him to the evil side, where he eventually succumbed to the Dark Lord himself. The Ringwraiths, on the other hand, were originally nine men and only their desire for power and let to their corruption and destruction.

This these offered a view on how well J.R.R. Tolkien has constructed his imaginary world, all of its evil character, which principles he inclined to while creating it and how did his faith affected him. It is possible to say, that all of the evil character Tolkien created within the story subjected to the principle of St. Augustine, where nothing is originally created bad and evil.

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