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Mythological Sources of Tolkien's Prose

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Abstract

This thesis is focused on proving the fact that characters of the prose of John Ronald Reul Tolkien are based primarily on the sources from old mythology, namely the Old Germanic literature as *Elder* and *Snorri's Edda*, the Old English epos *Beowulf* and other Northern and Celtic myths and tales. Due to a large number of characters, the work depicts only a group belonging to the evil side. The first part of the thesis discusses several wide spread opinions about the possible sources for Tolkien's characters and tries to put the facts into a clearer context. In the second part, individual characters are compared with their sources from mythology, common features are shown and conclusions derived.

Keywords: Tolkien, J.R.R.; high fantasy; mythology; evil characters.

Název: Mytologické zdroje Tolkienovy prózy

Shrnutí:

Práce se snaží dokázat, že postavy z děl Johna Ronalda Reula Tolkiena jsou založeny především na mytologických zdrojích, jmenovitě *Starší* a *Snorriho Edda*, staroanglický epos *Beowulf* a další severské a keltské mýty a příběhy. Díky velkému množství postav se práce zabývá pouze postavami na straně zla. V první části je diskutováno několik rozšířených názorů o možných zdrojích pro Tolkienovy postavy a snaží se je uvést do jasnějšího kontextu. Ve druhé části jsou jednotlivé postavy rozebírány konkrétně a srovnávány se svými předobrazy v mytologii. Na základě porovnávání společných prvků jsou vyvozovány závěry.

Klíčová slova: Tolkien, J.R.R.; fantasy literatura; mytologie; záporné postavy.

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1. Introduction

The work of J.R.R. Tolkien, especially the prose about the Middle-earth became a cultural phenomenon and it is not easy to stay negligent to it. One part of critics claim that the importance of the set of the novels are overvalued, as Edmund Wilson who claims that *The Lord of the Rings* is in fact a children book that got out of author's hand (Carter 2002, 14). However, the majority of critics and Tolkien's readers consider the novels *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* milestones in high fantasy genre. Since Tolkien's later work has a very complicated structure and readers admire author's imagination considering settings, plot and characters, this thesis tries to go behind the borders of plain acceptance of the scenes presented, and recovers the background of Tolkien's world of fantasy.

As an approach to the study of the sources of Tolkien's prose, investigation in old mythology is prioritized and the traditional process of exploring author's life is shaded. Humphrey Carpenter quotes Tolkien's words that support this method:

“Tolkien himself did not entirely approve of biography. Or rather, he disliked its use as a form of literary criticism. ‘One of my strongest opinions’, he once wrote, ‘is that investigation of an author's biography is an entirely vain and false approach to his works’” (Carpenter 1989, 9).

It is indeed impossible to ignore the circumstances under which certain author wrote but deriving the reasons for their work only from life experience can be misleading. The thesis stems from the fact that Tolkien's main literary interest was in Scandinavian and Old English literature and that several features from his own work evidently resemble these pieces of art. The aim of the first part is to foreshadow various opinions about sources of Tolkien's characters drawing primarily on author's life, and confront them with ideas concerning mythological sources. It is not intended to refuse other theories but rather raise the significance of those connected with mythology.

In the second part of the thesis, separate characters are analyzed and compared with their models from mythology, common features are presented and supportive arguments from scientific resources are given. The focus is put on one group of characters – the evil ones, since they represent a consistent group around one leader at a

time in comparison with the good ones, who figure separately or as members of various sub-groups. After introducing the main leaders of evil, their most significant allies, goblins and trolls, are presented and the list is complemented by less numerous or influential characters that also show any connection to the mythology of older cultures. The group of evil characters was chosen because they are attractively pictured in Tolkien's prose, in most criticisms and literary studies usually heroes and noble characters are preferred and the evil is being pushed to the background. As Tolkien claims in his essay *The Monsters and the Critics*, in literature, there are many heroes but few successfully pictured dragons (Čudrnáková 2008, 302) and since his dragons and other monsters are pictured more than successfully they deserve attention. The element of evil is important not only in fantastic stories and without evil even the good could not be recognized. The moral of stories dealing with the confrontation of good and evil is in realizing the fact that evil can be defeated although sometimes outnumbered and that hope does not die. As G. K. Chesterton said: "Fairy Tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten" (Brown 2007, 1).

2. Overcoming several presumptions about possible sources for the work of J.R.R. Tolkien

2.1. Tolkien's work

Professor John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is primarily known as an English writer who became famous mostly for his fantasy novels *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (further in text referred to as *LR*). However, being a fantasy writer was not his original occupation. He studied Old English and other languages as the Ancient Greek and Old Norse at Oxford University and as a professor at this university he continued in his philological studies concerning Old English, Gothic, Old Icelandic, Medieval Welsh or Finnish, worked on compiling a dictionary, translations and criticisms, and studied Scandinavian literature. When he decided to write fairy tales for his children, he probably did not expect that the world of fairies and fantasy will absorb him for the rest of his life and that the stories for children will grow into a complex work of great extent. Nowadays, he is considered a father of a high fantasy genre and a source of motives for other writers. During his work on books for children he modestly started writing stories flavouring old legends and myths, since it was connected with his interests and studies, and finally decided to create a sophisticated set of stories that should have stand for the original English mythology which was missing. This is also proved by the fact that Tolkien supplied his novels with a large-scale appendixes, maps, calendars or alphabets. Dealing with the topic of Scandinavian literature and translating *Beowulf* he often regretted that England does not have a rich platform of mythology like for example the Scandinavian countries. Tolkien expressed his plan in a letter to Milton Waldman:

“I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil) ... There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish ... but nothing English ... Of course there was and is the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing ... 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 ... which I would dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. (Carpenter 1981, 144).” (quoted in Fimi 2006, 159)

Starting with the book *Father Christmas Letters*, where the characters were still fairy tale creatures and for example goblins appeared as small black tricky little men, continuing with *The Hobbit*, where the plot and all its elements developed in deeper proportions, he reached the stage of *Silmarillion*, where not only the characters but the setting and action as well were formed into a highly deliberate unit with its own history, philosophy, geography or linguistics. Tolkien's characters and their environment developed from the easily understandable fairy tale world of *The Hobbit* to a complicated hierarchy of family tribes and relationships among them, surrounded by settings described into the smallest details. Tolkien invented his fantasy world from the far beginning of the creation of the world by the original God called Ilúvatar, describing the history of each part of the world called Middle-earth and introducing various kinds of characters speaking their own languages, having special physiognomy and behaviour patterns. In the times after publishing *The Hobbit* and during the work on *The Silmarillion* and the *LR* Tolkien admitted that he does not approve much with the first book and that it contains features of children literature although it was not fully aimed at children's audience. Further he claimed that *The Hobbit* was an introduction to the *LR* (Bramlett 2003, 26). His intention in the later stories was to appeal as much authentic as possible to resemble old indigenous stories. He liked to read the old sagas in original, search in unfinished tales and lost poems and tried to put similar elements to his work as well. Sometimes he pretended that part of his stories were lost or rewritten by someone else and this attempts became more believable thanks to the fact that it was his son Christopher who was in charge of organizing, rewriting or explaining his father's notes after Tolkien's dead. Although Tolkien started with *The Silmarillion* already before *The Hobbit* he could not find the final form and when he offered it to the publishers for the first time he was rejected. That is why *The Silmarillion* had to be published posthumously.

With publishing *The Hobbit* and the *LR*. Tolkien's work became very popular not only in Britain but also translations into many foreign languages followed and already during his life, Tolkien could enjoy the profits of a well known and respectable author. Moreover, after his death the interest in his work did not decrease but the opposite happened. Tolkien's son Christopher published his father's unfinished works and fragments compiled into many books, film producers started to be interested in

Tolkien's work commercially and at the turn of the twentieth century the fans of Tolkien would read almost anything mentioning Tolkien's name. A wide spectrum of authors dealt with the topic of Tolkien's life and work in criticisms, essays and articles of ranging quality. Tolkien himself, in an interview with Henry Resnik in Niekas, disapproved all deep studies about his work at least during his life. He considered them generally bad, being either psychological analyses or researches about the sources of his work. Moreover, he claimed that such work is a waste of energy. However, not only Carter but most of the critics dealing with the topic of Tolkien's work think that Tolkien as a high esteemed university professor was not comfortable with the idea of becoming a popular icon not because of his scientific work but thanks to the imaginative writing (Carter 2002, 34-35). Despite Professor's disfavour, his work became a mile stone in literature and either critics or laics keep searching for the roots of his elaborate stories.

2.2. Tolkien's childhood

Logically, critics search for the sources of Tolkien's prose in his life; however, individual groups select different aspects. To find the real roots of Tolkien's work is not easy especially because the author himself rejected almost any of the opinions given. A great deal of critics claim that Tolkien's childhood in Africa was the main experience influencing author's imagination and perception of the world of fantasy. The accident of being bitten by a spider is often connected with the episode from *The Hobbit* when the companion of Bilbo and the dwarves is captured by spiders in the Mirkwood or with the creation of the characters of enormous spiders Ungoliath from *The Silmarillion* and Shelob, which attacked Frodo and Sam, the main figures of the *LR* in book four, chapter "Shelob's Lair". Even other characters are being connected with African environment and in this area Tolkien is sometimes criticized and even blamed of racial bias because the evil characters are mostly portrayed as black while the noble Elves are depicted as white tall shiny creatures. In his commentary, Anderson Rearick III points out a quote from a novel by Jonathan Coe *The Rotters' Club*, where one character speaks about Tolkien as a racist thinker who made Orcs to appear "unmistakably negroid" and Sauron's helpers dark skinned evil warriors from tropical southern islands (Rearick 2004, 861). Further, Rearick quotes from Tolkien's biography by Humphrey Carpenter

and points out that the historical period in which Tolkien lived distinguished races and class levels (Rearick 2004, 864). Although Tolkien's family had African servants in their house in Bloemfontein as well, according to the evidence in Carpenter's *J.R.R. Tolkien Biography*, they treated them in a pleasant way. As Carpenter describes, there was an incident when John Ronald as a baby was stolen by a servant who wanted to show a white child to his friends. Tolkien's family did not fire the servant as would be expected and he, as an act of respect to his master, named his own son Isaak Mister Tolkien Victor (Carpenter 1989, 21). This story shows that even in a historical period of racial inequality, the environment of Tolkien's childhood did not support any racial thoughts that could be brought by the author to his later life significantly enough to represent such an important part in his writing. The bad described as black and the good pictured as white is found in many other pieces of literature without the authors' connections to life in Africa or racist environment. Rearick advises in the end of his commentary to perceive the overall message of the *LR* rather than separate battles and appearances (Rearick 2004, 868). Furthermore he implements another point of view to the story of the *LR* which is the possible Christian context of the novel and connects it with the matter of racism.

2.3. Religious aspect

Connecting the meaning of the *LR* with Christian religion is also a common point of view of literary critics because Professor Tolkien was known as a devout Roman Catholic. Rearick (2004, 867-868) introduces several quotes from the Bible, where the terms 'dark' and 'light' are mentioned without any hints to racism. For example Job 10.21:

"Before I goe, and returne not, unto the darke land, that is covered with the mist of death: A land of miserie and darkenesse, where is the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horrour inhabiteth" (Catholic "Rheims-Douai" 1582-1610 translation).

That is the reason why Orcs and evil creatures are dark and not light – they are bad and not good. At this point a question arises whether the goblins should be blamed as cruel or if they are only weak servants of higher evil power. In the *LR* they seem to be

completely dependent on their master Sauron, for example the Lieutenant of the Tower of Barad Dur introduces himself as “The Mouth of Sauron” (Tolkien 2001, 872). When Sauron is defeated his vassals start to behave like if they lost their own mind and their behaviour is described as following:

”[T]he creatures of Sauron, orc or troll or beast spell-enslaved, 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.” (Tolkien 2001, 928).

According to T. A. Shippey, Orcs have consciousness about what good and bad is although, they act mostly bad. When Frodo in the *LR* is paralysed by Shelob and then falls into the hands of Orcs, one of them expresses his observation that they should be careful because the captured hobbit: “may have had nothing to do with the real mischief. The big fellow with the sharp sword doesn’t seem to have thought him worth much anyhow – just left him lying: regular elvish trick.” (Tolkien 2001, 722). The Orc shows his conviction that it is wrong to abandon ones companions. After this conversation there appears another part of speech where one of the Orcs says that he did exactly the same thing, left his companion in troubles: “D’you remember old Ufthak? We lost him for days. Then we found him in a corner; hanging up he was, but he was wide awake and glaring How we laughed!” (Tolkien 2001, 723). As of the human being the characteristic feature of an Orc is a lack of self-criticism. The Orcs quoted here are aware of what is bad but at the same time they do not avoid doing that. Shippey claims that the evil here is just an absence of the shadow of the good (Shippey 200, 132-133). Frodo pities the Orcs and says to another hobbit Sam in the chapter “The Tower of Cirith Ungol”:

“The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don’t think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them; and if they are to live at all, they have to live like other living creatures.” (Tolkien 2001, 893).

Simply, the evil was not created; it arose. The reason for that is according to Tolkien’s original texts, that Ilúvatar is the only one who can create and nothing what he creates is evil in the beginning. Their behaviour of evil creatures only follows the circumstances and since they have not experienced the life among uncorrupted beings they are wicked and behave sadistically and brutally (Rosebury 2003, 109). As Shippey suggests mentioning a work of C. S. Lewis *Mere Christianity*:

“when human beings exercised their own free will in withdrawing their service and their intentions from God; in the end, and when the divine plan has been fulfilled, all evils may be annulled, cancelled, brought to good, as the Fall of Man was by the Incarnation and death of Christ.”

and further he adds: “even evil-doers are liable to excuse themselves in terms of what is good: breakers of promises insist that they do so because the circumstances have changed, murders claim that they were provoked” (Shippey 2000, 131). According to Lewis, nobody likes badness just because it is bad and he describes evil as an absence of good not an original thing, rather as Frodo said. However, these arguments are rather disputable because Tolkien himself did his best to make the evil more realistic but sometimes funny as well, as Shippey adds (2000, 131).

Concerning the portrayal of evil a perception of the relationship with the good is interesting. Tolkien pictures evil in a plausible way and avoids the fight between good and bad being perceived as simplified and naïve. Rosebury builds on the thoughts of W. H. Auden and suggests that evil should not be defeated by accident or a punishment from an outer supreme level. To support the defeat of the bad with moral qualities, it is eligible when the evil side dissolves by its own inner influence and in a way destroys itself (Rosebury 2003, 36). It would not function convictive if Ilúvatar let Sauron disappear as he did it with his ancestor Morgoth, or if the troops of the alliance of the good defeated evil in an unequal battle. Instead, evil was destroyed by its own cruelty, selfishness, disability to cooperate and constant pressure against the will of its victims. The biggest disadvantage of the dark side is the lack of imagination, since while the good is able to put itself into the place of the evil and estimate its further actions; the evil is not capable of this. Sauron for example, cannot imagine that his enemies would not use the Ring and voluntarily wanted to destroy it (Fuller 2004, 22). Thus, the intellectual power wins and the story gets a flavour of moral significance.

Michael Skeparnides in his article “A Reflection on Tolkien’s World” insists primarily on religious context of Tolkien’s work about the Middle-earth. Concerning bad characters he claims:

“In ‘the Silmarillion’ the long war between Morgoth and the Valar bears a powerful resemblance to Satan's downfall from heaven and the desire to rule the world in darkness as applicable to the Apocalypse.” (Skeparnides 2002, 1).

If Morgoth, the leader of all evil from *The Silmarillion*, is seen as Satan, goblins as his servants stand then for other creatures from hell. Another critic supporting this opinion is Randel Helms who considers Sauron, the later evil leader, to be modelled after the Biblical Satan as well as Milton's version of Lucifer in *Paradise Lost* (Helms 1975, 75). Sauron seduced his servants into evil, enslaved them and gained control over them. In case of the Ringwraiths being once proud kings, whom Helms compares to Biblical Adam, it was their greed for power that Sauron used to seduce them.

Taking a closer look on the religious aspect of Tolkien's work, slightly different point of view is necessary. Indeed, Tolkien as a Christian could not suppress his beliefs about good and bad in his writing, however his novels about the Middle-earth are flavoured by Christian thoughts equally to most of literature of the Western world. Motives as compassion, belief in forgiveness or in higher powers leading the steps of the characters, as well as the overall theme of good in minority overcoming evil powers by sublime intentions are not a proof of a Christian message inside the novel. The more important attributes of the story are individual's trust into one's own abilities instead of praying for help of higher deity. In fact, as Colbert mentions, there are no Christian rituals mentioned in the stories of Middle-earth, although there are a lot of hints suggesting it, whether it is the regrets of the Elves that they have to live forever while Men are free from this burden and their fate is Death, the gift of Ilúvatar, or Frodo's mercy to Gollum despite the temptation and the approach of his fellow Sam. Colbert perceives these facts as Tolkien's intention and claims that he wanted rather show the religion and be subtle than talk about it (2002, 107-108). However, at the same time he gives no persuasive arguments for his theory except of mentioning the people of Gondor who refuse religion to avoid repeating their early error of worshipping Sauron. This is a not really convincing proof that Tolkien intentionally built the lack of religious ceremony into the plot while he puts hints of religious influences on every page of the *LR*. Rosebury compares the religious situation of the Middle-earth to Augustinian universe where all creation is good and evil is only good twisted from its original perfection. This theory is derived among the others from the fact that Sauron is not a God but a fallen angel who cannot create and only mocks the original forms in the same way as it happened to him. Rosebury concludes this thought by stating that theology is

not important at this point and the essential thing is the maintenance of the negativity of evil and the intrinsic goodness of creation (2003, 36).

A book dealing with matters connected with religion, as the creation of the world, its inhabitants, the existence of Gods and the life after death, is *The Silmarillion*, where the beginnings of Tolkien's imagined world, the Middle-earth are explained. Considering the features of the organization of the universe, the resemblance of a pre-Christian Germanic mythology is apparent. The appearance of the universe Eä consisting of several horizontally situated levels with the real world in the middle Arda (see Appendix 2a) made of continents for example the Middle-Earth, Morgoth's underground kingdom Utumno or later Angbad and the place above and in the West, where the Valar dwell – the Valinor, resembles obviously the system of the universe from *Edda*, a set of poems from Old Norse mythology (see Appendix 3). In *Edda*, the real world Midgard (reminding again of the name Middle-earth) is also placed in the middle how the name suggests. Hel is situated below and it is the place of the dead. Asgard is the top level where the Gods dwell. The presence of the hall for departed Elves in Valinor – Mandos: "whence they may in time return" (Tolkien 1995, 48) significantly reminds Odin's hall called Valhalla where the dead warriors depart and wait for the final battle of Gods and giants – the Ragnarök. Valhalla is located within Asgard as well as Mandos is in Valinor. Going further, Niflheim (the Mist world) in the north of Eddic world could be compared to Tolkien's Misty Mountains in the north of Middle Earth, Vanaheim in the west, where a closed group of Gods dwell (Vlčková 1999, 240) reminds of the West beyond the Great Sea where only Elves can go and no mortals (with very few exceptions). Slight similarity can be also seen in Alfheim above Midgard and Svart-alfa-heim below, the dwellings of Elves and Dark Elves. In Tolkien's world Elves and Dark elves are also mentioned, although the vertical placement is not clearly dealt with. Spacks also mentions Tolkien's explanation of the Christian imagination and Northern mythology. In the Christian fable, the confrontation between the soul and its adversaries is important and the Christian finally wins. On the other hand, the Northern myths present the struggle in a darker view. The fight between the man and the monster ends in this world, never in afterlife, as it sometimes happens in Christian stories, and the man is often defeated. Yet man continues to fight with the weapons of "naked will and courage". This can be seen in the case of hobbits who do

not give up and despite the situation appearing as hopeless, continue with their quest. Tolkien's heroes possess these qualities and are confronted with the evil who are disloyal, rely on being outnumbered and usually act against their free will (Spacks 2004, 54).

As well as the Germanic mythology, elements resembling Antic mythology appear in the work of Professor Tolkien. Although Valar can be perceived as Christian angels, the helpers of the one God, their visits of the world of mortal people in their physical form can be more compared to either Germanic or Antic Gods. Moreover, Valar are often called Gods in Tolkien's work. As Čudrnáková describes, Valar adopted human character, although they are more impersonalized than European gods and do not interfere so much into the lives of ordinary people, however they represent an important part in the creation of the world. An aspect showing the similarity with the Greek or Roman Gods most is the fact that there is certain division of roles among the Gods and the system is very conformable to the antic pantheon. Tolkien's Manwë, the highest of the Gods on his throne on a high hill Taniquetil resembles Zeus (Roman Jupiter) from Olympus; Ulmo, the lord of the water is similar to Poseidon or Mandos, the king of the halls of the dead shares some of the attributes of Hades. There are also goddesses as Yavanna, the queen of the earth whose correspondent can be seen in Greek goddess Demeter (Čudrnáková 2008, 219-220). It is not necessary to name other similarities from Germanic or Antic mythology because they apparently exceed those from Christianity.

2.4. The two World Wars

Another group of critics stresses the connection of Tolkien's War of the Ring with the two World Wars. This happens mostly because Tolkien was engaged in the First World War when he volunteered for a military service in the British Army. Shaun F. D. Hughes in the review of various books about J. R. R. Tolkien mentions Janet Croft's study "War and the Work of J. R. R. Tolkien" where the author stresses the element of demonizing the enemy in *The Hobbit* and the *LR* with a reference to the characters of Orcs (Hughes 2004, 994). Croft also sees a post-traumatic syndrome in the behaviour of the main hobbit character Frodo who recovers himself by writing rather

than talking about the war experience (Hughes 2004, 995). This picture can be compared to Tolkien, who started writing *The Book of Lost Tales* during his recovery; however, Tolkien is not a typical example of a writer with the post-traumatic syndrome at all.

Similar opinion about the connection with the Second World War represent Colin Wilson and Martin Dodsworth claiming that: “the forces of Sauron are designed to represent those of Nazi Germany, pitted in a patriotic allegory against plucky little Britisher-hobbits.” (Rosebury 2003, 161). Rosebury opposes these suggestions and writes that Tolkien’s dislike of Hitler does not necessarily prove this, furthermore he adds quotations from an interview of Professor himself with Philip Norman: “I’ve never had those feelings about the Germans” and “I’m very anti that sort of thing.” (Rosebury 2003, 161). The ideas about Sauron as a Hitler or Stalin, the Orcs and Nazgûls as the Nazis or the Shire under Saruman as the post-war Labour government deny the imaginative autonomy to the Middle-earth and turn the novels into a kind of coded satire (Rosebury 2003, 158). Jessica Yates sees the roots of the *LR* in the World War as well. She denies that Tolkien’s goblins should stand for Germans but at the same time she admits her opinion about the connection of the *LR* with the Second World War and claims:

“He [Tolkien] was particularly concerned about ultimate war, which he predicted before the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima: ‘Shall there be two cities of Minas Morgul, grinning at each other across a dead land filled with rotteness?’” (Yates 1999, 4).

This parallel is, however, also quite questionable. There are several hints indeed reminding of the Second World War, as Shippey foreshadows, the Ring could be seen as nuclear weapons, the coalition of Rohan, Gondor and the Shire as the Allied powers, Mordor as the Axis powers but still the more important signs are missing (Shippey 2000, 163). Tolkien in his foreword to the *LR* refuses any explanation connected with the Second World War:

“As for any inner meaning or ‘message’, it has in the intention of the author none. It is neither allegorical nor topical. ... The crucial chapter, ‘The Shadow of the Past’ is one of the oldest parts of the tale. It was written long before the foreshadow of 1939 had yet become a threat of inevitable disaster,” (Tolkien 2001, xvi)

Further he points out the main differences between his story and the story of the Second World War. He writes that if these two stories were parallel the Ring would have been seized and used against Sauron as nuclear weapons were used against Japan, Barad-dûr would have been occupied and Sauron would have been enslaved and so on (Tolkien 2001, xvi-xvii).

Rosebury disagrees with the fact that the war against Sauron represents any of the World Wars, least of all those against Germany and pointing out what many critics ignore he concludes: “influence by X is one thing; representation of X is another.” (Rosebury 2003, 161). Tolkien might have put some elements of behaviour of soldiers from the First World War that he experienced to the character of Sam Gamgee, or some images from the battles he fought in to the scenes from Dead Marshes but the idea of representing the World Wars in Tolkien’s novels as an allegory or satire is misleading.

2.5. Other opinions

Other explanations concerning the sources for Tolkien’s characters were given about the division of the world to the developed West represented by Elves mastering crafts and magic and the backward East inhabited by goblins working manually in poor conditions. As Burns claims, in *The Hobbit* and the *LR*, Tolkien follows the tradition taken from the Norse mythology. In Snorri’s *Edda*, the land of Vana, a group of Gods, lies in the West so the direction towards danger, mountains, wastelands, and ice is directed to the opposite side of the world, that means to the North or East, where the lands of dark, giants and death lie. The same pattern is used in Tolkien’s *Hobbit* where the company goes to the north-east where a dragon guards his treasure or in the *LR*, where Frodo and Sam wander eastwards to Mordor. During the plot of the *LR*, the eastern part as an origin of evil is obviously stressed but as Tolkien explains, this division has only geographic reasons and he used East only because he did use North as a cradle of evil already before (Burns 2005, 79-80). The original stronghold of evil was traditionally in the North in *The Silmarillion* and after the evil leader Morgoth and his kingdom was destroyed, there was a necessity to built another residence of the bad and that had to be far from the good who lived in the West. Tolkien also believed that for his spectrum of readers, who were mostly Western or Northern temper, the image of the far

East resembles the lands of historic danger since it is the place where the enemy mostly came from (Burns 2005, 189). At the same time, an island in the West behind the sea as a place for those who do not die was not selected randomly (see Appendix 2b). Throughout the history, the place where the sun sets was considered an ideal location for places like this and already in ancient Greece the Island of the Blessed was located past the edge of the ocean. In Celtic legends, the people of Tuatha Dé Danaan resembling Tolkien's Elves, departed by boat from Ireland to the enchanted island in the West (Colbert 2002, 172).

Some critics see the hidden message behind the *LR* in author's negative attitude against industrialisation. J. R. Watson sees Mordor as Leeds with its slag-heaps. Rosebury opposes this argument by stating that Mordor is definitely not Leeds, which Tolkien, according to preserved sources probably liked, and that: "the orcs are not industrial workers in disguise" (Rosebury 2003, 161). In fact, Orcs do not even work, they mostly destroy products of other people's work and if sometimes Sauron's servants labour, it is only in a role of slaves under the threat of death or torture (Rosebury 2002, 162). Similar opinion is given by Carter who raises the thought that Mordor could be modelled after Birmingham, an important industrial centre with its steelworks and other factories spoiling the environment with smoke and carbon black. The dirty streets with cheerless houses from Tolkien's childhood could, according to Carter, inspire author's Mordor, the land of dark, deserts, dust and wastelands (Carter 2002, 17). It is again searching for allegory where it could not be found. There are some other hints of these thoughts throughout the stories of Middle-earth like for example Sauron continuously polluting the earth. His land is usually described as dark wasteland with bad air: "[d]arkling against a pallid sky, ... ridges of Ered Lithui, grey as ash, ...A faint smoke curled above it, as if fire smouldered in the hill beneath" (Tolkien 2001, 622-623), and his servant destroy the nature: "pollute the soil, poison watercourses, pour smoke into the atmosphere, cut down trees, create deserts where grass once grew" (Rosebury 2003, 177). As Spacks quotes from the *LR*, 'Sauron can torture and destroy the very hills' (Spacks 2004, 55). Another feature supporting this idea is the fact that Orcs product, or rather make their slaves to product, items of hard industry: "especially the ingenious devices for killing large numbers of people at once, for wheels and engines and explosions always delighted them" (Tolkien 1999, 60) while the Elves are involved

more into arts and crafts. Spacks also claims in her article "Power and Meaning in the LR": "It is characteristic of the Enemy to depend upon machinery rather than natural forces. Saruman's city has smithies, furnaces, iron wheels revolving endlessly, hammers thudding, steam rising." and Treebeard describes him as having 'a mind of metal and wheels' (Spacks 2004, 55). Chance adds that not only Sauron destroys nature but also abuses nature's laws by mutating living creatures and enslaving their free will (2004, 217). Despite these elements there is no reason to deduce Tolkien's loathing for industry except that he was aware of its impacts on the nature. As Rosebury (2003, 176) foreshadows, in Tolkien's *Leaf by Niggle*, Niggle enters the paradise by a local train and a sparkling tracks and mellow smell of the railroad ties are described at that place of the book (Tolkien 1992, 51).

Nick Otty mentions a commentator of Tolkien's work, who also offered quite original allegory. He quotes Carey who sees Mordor as: "'Wigan or Sheffield in the 1930s', while Aragorn is 'like a Tory cabinet minister'. To John Carey, as we have seen, the hobbits are 'gentleman' and the orcs 'working-class'." (Rosebury 2003, 160-161). This opinion belongs to rather extreme ones and can be accompanied with plenty others of this kind.

3. Tolkien's characters in connection with old mythology

3.1. Myths and fairy-tales

To certain extent, Professor Tolkien could have been influenced by any experience from his life but studying his entire work into detail it becomes obvious that the main sources for settings and especially for the characters come from old Scandinavian mythical literature, for example *The Kalevala*, Finnish saga about heroes and wizards, Icelandic collections of epic poetry *Edda*, Icelandic *Saga of the Nibelungs* and for evil characters especially the Anglo-Saxon saga of *Beowulf*. The monster Grendel from this piece of literature is a prototype for many evil creatures from Tolkien's Middle-earth. These connections were also denied by the author and concerning the *Saga of the Nibelungs* and especially its most famous version, the opera cycle by a composer Richard Wagner *The Ring of the Nibelungs*, he claimed that the only similarity between his *LR* and the *Nibelungs* is that both of the rings mentioned in these pieces of art were round; that is all (Carpenter 1989, 206). When the *Silmarillion* was first rejected by the publishers because of containing "eye-splitting Celtic names" and dealing with Celtic matters, professor answered in anger that it was not his intention to use any Celtic sources because he does not know them, dislikes them and considers them mad (Fimi 2006, 156-157). It is difficult to judge this comment because in another place Tolkien admits that one of the reasons for modelling his invented language Sindarin upon Welsh was "because it seems to fit the rather 'Celtic' type of legends and stories told of its speakers" (Carpenter 1981, 176 quoted in Fimi 2006, 156). Nevertheless, even without Tolkien's approval, there are more undeniable pieces of evidence of usage of the mythological sources mentioned above.

Tolkien's passion for Celtic myths could have originated from his work on editing the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* which was published in 1925. The work on this book probably raised Tolkien's interest in Celtic studies since according to the customs of that time, it also included a study about the Arthurian legend back to its roots in Celtic material (Fimi 2006, 157). Soon after finishing this book, Tolkien wrote a poem and two unfinished works on Celtic topics. The poem inspired by the folklore of Brittany was called *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun*

and the two unfinished works were *The Fall of Arthur* where, as Carpenter (1989, 168) describes: "the king and Gawain go to war in 'Saxon lands' but are summoned home by news of Mordred's treachery" and *The King of the Green Dozen* which is according to Tolkien himself: "an unfinished pseudo-Celtic fairy-story of a mildly satirical order" (Carpenter 1981, 40 quoted in Fimi 2006, 158). In his later writings, however, he tried to distinguish his faeries clearly from those of Celtic roots to maintain the originality of his own English faerie stories (Fimi 2006, 161).

One of the sources that Professor Tolkien admits to be inspired by, are old fairy-tales, especially the matter from *The Faerie Queene*, a masterpiece of English poetry by Edmund Spenser mentioned in his essay *On Fairy-Stories*. As described in Shippey's *Author of the Century*, using almost forgotten material Tolkien opened up the elements being hardly known from some classic European fairy tales collections for the contemporary imagination. Concepts like troll or goblin were partly known from fairy-tales by Grimm brothers in Germany, Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway, Perrault in France or Joseph Jacobs in England and from the many Victorian 'myth and legend' handbooks that drew on them. Trolls were not so well known in English because the word comes from Scandinavia and goblins appeared in the literary fairy-tale imitations of George MacDonald (Shippey 2000, 12). The main difference between the characters of Professor Tolkien and various creatures from old myths and fairy-tales is that Tolkien described his characters in details while in the old sources there are just mentions about mythical beings but no description was needed. Old peoples had their own image about fairy creatures which was more or less common for everybody (Čudrnáková 2008, 37). Thus, it was Tolkien who made real developed characters of goblins or trolls and gave them a clearer face. This is what Tolkien's goblins have in common with the goblins of George MacDonald about whom Tolkien also writes as his inspiration. MacDonald describes his goblins in a fairy-tale *The Princess and the Goblin* following way:

“...they lived away from the sun, in cold and wet and dark places. They were now, not ordinarily ugly, but either absolutely hideous, or ludicrously grotesque both in face and form. There was no invention, they said, of the most lawless imagination expressed by pen or pencil, that could surpass the extravagance of their appearance.” (MacDonald 1996, 8).

Furthermore, as well as Tolkien's goblins, MacDonald's ones lived underground and came into existence as another species. Tolkien's goblins originated from Elves while

MacDonald's goblins came into being from people. There is again a slight difference between Tolkien's and MacDonald's goblins. While Tolkien's goblins were not considered very clever, MacDonald gave his characters more mental qualities: "And as they grew misshapen in body they had grown in knowledge and cleverness, and now were able to do things no mortal could see the possibility of" (MacDonald 1996, 8). On the other hand, in the end of the story, MacDonald's goblins are easily outwitted too.

3.2. The Evil Leaders

Looking generally at Tolkien's characters from the stories of Middle-earth, they can be divided into two large groups as mentioned above – the good and the evil. The evil characters were not created by the original God Ilúvatar and are only a mocked antithesis of the good ones. The most obvious example are the Orcs who were according to one story in *The Silmarillion* created by torturing the Elves in the depths of Utumno. Finally, they became the pure opposite of the Elves. While the Elves are subtle and elegant, the Orcs are described as incredibly ugly. As the Elves are light, able to walk easily on or above the surface, the Orcs live underground. Moreover, the Elves worship the light and stars and Orcs fear it and travel and act only under the cover of darkness. Elves value their origins, ancestors and fellows, Orcs are able to kill its own kind (Zimbardo 2004, 72). In fact, most of Tolkien's characters have their antithesis on the other side of good or bad. While the essence of evil trolls is stone, their opposite, the Ents are good and their material is wood; or as Galadriel is the Elvish Queen of light and wisdom, Shelob is on the contrary the woman representative of darkness and low sins (more contrasting characters are compared further in the text in the chapters about particular figures).

Furthermore, there are few characters that stand at the boarder of good and bad or being once good they turned into evil. The most obvious representative of this group is Gollum, once an ordinary hobbit Smeagol who was transformed by the power of the Ring into an underground hybridized creature longing only for the Ring and being able to do anything to keep it in his ownership. In some parts of the story of the *LR*, Gollum's not totally bad part of his personality emerges. Primarily, Gollum is not in service of any Dark Master, moreover he was tortured in the cells of Mordor to reveal

certain information for finding the One Ring for Sauron, and that is obviously what excludes him from the group of pure evil. Wormtongue, a Man of Rohan, clever but corrupted and seduced by a wizard Saruman or, Saruman himself, who was the head of the order of Wizards and fell into the power of Sauron, can be also listed in this group of bordering characters. Other figure balancing on the edge of good and bad is Boromir who significantly belongs more to the good part but finally is influenced by the power of the Ring and, soon after he shows his bad side, dies in the hands of Orcs. Other characters of this kind can be found in the *Silmarillion* as well, but they form only a minority group not considerably following mythological sources. Chance also divides the evil characters according to the sins they are guilty of: “Wormtongue, Grishnákh, and Saruman display aspects of the higher sins of pride, avarice, envy, and wrath. ... Gollum and Shelob both illustrate the lower sins of gluttony, sloth, and lechery.” (Chance 2004, 216). A significant group of evil characters is gathered around one evil leader, originally Morgoth being followed by his successor Sauron in the land called Mordor and its surroundings.

Already the word ‘Mordor’ has its inner meaning since it comes from the Anglo-Saxon ‘morþor’ which means murder, deadly sin or torment (Buns 2005, 162). The origin of the evil leader Morgoth can be derived from the Christian tradition and following the pattern of a fallen angel. On the other hand, in the Germanic mythology the ambivalent figure of God Loki shares some characteristic features with this evil lord. Being sometimes described as a friend of Gods and sometimes as the originator of many evil deeds, he can be compared to Melkor who started his life among the saints and then turned to the evil side and became their most powerful enemy, renamed by the Elves to Morgoth. Loki’s children, wolf Fenri, snake Jörmungand and Hel, the ruler of the world of death, were deadly creatures bringing fear even to Gods as well as Morgoth’s creatures: wolves, dragons, goblins, trolls and Balogs scared the world around them. Loki as well as Morgoth was masters of deceits and with their clever talks managed to start quarrels among their rivals. Contrary to Morgoth, Loki was also helpful in some occasions, although mostly driven by his own profits (Vlčková 1999, 142-145). The common feature between Morgoth and Loki is also the fact that as members of the group of Gods they went against the majority carrying their own, mostly evil intentions until the Gods did not lose their temper with them and defeated them on the side of evil.

At the same, time they were both the force causing most of the progress in the stories they appeared in. Their evil doings and creation of monsters started significant changes in the lives of the Gods and others.

The character of the later evil leader Sauron can be again connected with old Germanic mythology. The meaning of the word Sauron can be found in Old Norse language meaning 'detestable, abominable' (Colbert 2002, 102) and in Anglo-Saxon, the word 'saurá' meant 'contemptible or filthy' (Čudrnáková 2008, 227). Sauron lost his former physical appearance after the drowning of Númenor and rose again in a form of an evil spirit. Sauron, described as bodiless entity represented by a single threatening eye, can be compared to God Odin, the protector of warriors. In the first place, even his extraordinary appearance relates him to Odin. The dark side of Odin is shown in his nature to give as well as take and not hesitating to kill, once it suits his plans. He respects only the rules of his own (Colbert 2002, 118). Among his several nicknames, Blindi or Bileyg is listed and this is connected with the story about pawning his own eye in want to enlarge his wisdom by drinking magic liquid (Vlčková 1999, 166). In fact, Odin lost a part of himself as Sauron did; moreover the image of an eye surrounded by fire corresponds again with another epithet of Odin – fiery-eyed (Burns 2005, 100). Not only appearance but especially the features of Sauron's behaviour reflects one of many characteristics of Odin. The darker face of Odin's character was the mastery of black magic thanks to which he could bring sickness or death upon people, take away their wisdom or power and give it to someone else. As a God of war, Odin sometimes kindled fights between nations and with his great army spent a big part of his life in battles (Čudrnáková 2008, 243-244). Sauron is definitely known as a deceiver or the Master of Treachery, one of his deceives being the Ringwraiths seduced by the power of the Ring and abused to serve Sauron driven by the lust for the Ring. Odin apart from being known under the nickname Illudig, which means 'the one with a black heart' (Vlčková 1999, 170) was given a name Deceiver of Treachery-Ruler. Another element, connecting both Odin and Sauron is that they possess a ring with supernatural power. As Burns (2005, 100) writes: "In Norse mythology one of the few objects associated with Odin is the ring Draupnir, an arm ring that magically produces eight more rings, ... every nine nights." This ring gives Odin endless wealth and power and with the rings from Draupnir he can control and buy loyalty of kings. In the stories about Middle-

earth, the One Ring is also superior to another three, seven and nine rings of power that helped Sauron to overpower the kings of Elves, Dwarves and Men who came under the ultimate power of the Dark Lord and in case of Men, became the non-dead Ringwraiths in the end (Colbert 2002, 118). In one of the Eddic stories an episode is pictured that Odin voluntarily removed the ring and put it onto the burial woodpile of Baldr. After some time, the ring was sent back to him from Hel, the land of the dead (Vlčková 1999, 54). This action is rather similar to what happens with the One Ring in Tolkien's work. The proprietor cannot affect the ownership of the Ring since it is ruled by higher powers. Although there were many who wanted to possess the Ring and were able to commit any evil deed to keep it or gain it back, the imaginary coincidence led the destination of it. Another attribute connecting the two characters is the presence of particular animals around these. As the most important, the wolves can be named. Odin's wolves Freki and Geri that sit at his feet are, according to *Edda*, fed with the flesh of warriors killed in battles. Very similar scenes are described in the *Silmarillion*, when talking about the original evil lord Morgoth who, together with Sauron, used to send demons in wolf bodies to hunt enemies. Moreover, Morgoth kept at his throne a wolf called Carcharoth (the Red Maw) and fed him with his own hand on the flesh of Men and Elves. Even Sauron is sometimes called the Lord of Wolves and does his best to imitate Morgoth, his former master (Burns 2005, 104). Tolkien uses a wolf-like animal Warg in the service of evil power as well. The word 'Warg' was borrowed from an Anglo-Saxon 'wearg' that means 'wolf', 'doomed' or 'evil animal'. The etymology of this word is probably the same as of Old Icelandic 'vargr' meaning 'wolf' or 'outcast' (Carter 2002, 158) or present Swedish word for wolf – 'varg'. *The Tolkien Companion* explains the word Warg in a following way: "A Northern Mannish name for wolves, but more properly applied to the evil werewolves... like Orcs, they were afraid of Sun." (Tyler 2002, 687). Apart from wolves, ravens and the carrion birds were Odin's helpers as well and informed him about the news in the world (Burns 2005, 100). Ravens in Tolkien's novels are pictured as useful positive characters that are usually wise but as helpers of Sauron, close relatives to ravens – crows appear in the role of spies. Already in *The Hobbit*, Balin explains to Bilbo, that crows are nasty suspicious looking creatures (Burns 2005, 102). In the *LR* the Fellowship is being spied by a 'crebain' (Tolkien 2001, 278), a larger kind of crows in service of Saruman, who

already turned onto the evil side. In Eddic stories, crows are usually the messengers of death and after a warrior dies, crows come to strike his heart with their beaks. In Celtic mythology, the Celtic Gods of war appeared on the battle fields in a shape of crows and fed on dead warriors (Čudrnáková 2008, 294-295). Last animal connected with Odin and having its response in Sauron's character is Odin's eight-legged otherworldly horse Sleipnir, born to the trickster God Loki. This animal, as well as Odin, has its good and bad side. While the good side was used by Tolkien for Gandalf's horse Shadowfax, the negative part can be seen in Sauron's flying monsters carrying the Ringwraiths. Sleipnir's negative side is derived especially from his role in the underworld that is, he can transport Gods from and to the spirit world of the dead. H. R. Ellis Davison focused on Sleipnir's relationship to underworld and claims that the eight legs of the horse represent the eight legs of four men carrying the coffin at a burial and thus, Sleipnir himself represents the ride to the world of death. Compared to Sleipnir, the nameless monsters from Mordor carry Sauron's delegates on their back to send the enemies to the world of the dead as well (Burns 2005, 104-106). Both Morgoth and Sauron can be also compared to Germanic Gods possessing the ability to transform into other beings. To act in disguise, to spy, or just to entertain themselves, Germanic Gods used to appear in various shapes and the same ability was managed by the evil leaders from the *LR* and the *Silmarillion*. Apart from turning into various animals, Morgoth was able to figure as rather positive being as well.

To put the character of Odin into the right concept, he was indeed not only evil and sometimes he is seen as a source also for Saruman or even Gandalf. However, to picture the characters of these two wizards, Tolkien chose other aspects of Odin's personality since he was a complicated and inconsistent person in the Germanic mythology. Tolkien put Saruman and Gandalf into an open conflict in the *LR* and he intended to do a similar thing with Gandalf and Sauron in the end of the *LR* and in his *Letters* he claimed that it would have been a delicate balance. Finally, he refrained this idea because after all, Sauron is more concept than a character and since not even his appearance is that clear as Gandalf's, these two are more difficult to compare and confront with each other.

In *The Hobbit*, an evil leader is mentioned under the name Necromancer. Also this name is derived from one of the nicknames of God Odin and Necromancer meaning

'enchanter' or 'wizard' refers to his ability of speaking with the dead. The word 'necro' means in Ancient Greek 'a corpse'. In Eddic stories, Odin was often hiding his identity so as nobody knew he is a God and pretended being just a wizard (Colbert 2002, 116-117).

Taking Sauron's one eye into account, he can be compared not only to Odin but also to other one-eyed gods or demons from old legends. The tradition of one-eyed characters is probably derived from Gods of Sun in early history, such as Egyptian God Ra. One-eyed Sun God appears in many cultures like for example in Mesopotamia or Native American environment. They are usually omniscient and nothing can hide from their sight the same way as nothing can escape from the rays of the Sun. Sauron's eye sees everything too, and is especially sensitive to the presence of the Ring. Gollum avoids the Sun and Moon not only because he is used to live in the darkness of caves but also because they remind him of Sauron's all-seeing eye. Another creature resembling Sauron as a one-eyed creature can be found in old Irish stories. In Celtic myths, the God Balar (also known as Balor) is known to have a single fiery eye. He is the king of Celtic giants Fomorians. Balor of the Evil Eye, which is his full name, has a single fiery eye and can destroy the whole army at once by one glare. His eye was normally kept closed and in battles four men used to open it by a ring attached to his eyelid. Balar is killed in the final battle between Fomorians and Tuatha Dé Dannan, the Irish Gods (Eyres 2007, 192, 195). Concerning the Celtic myths, Bricriu, a common stimulator of fights and arguments, appears as well in a role of personification of evil (Čudrnáková 2008, 226). Another evil leader from Northern mythology was Hiisi, a dark demon and personification of evil from Finnish *Kalevala*. His land Hiitola was described as dark, dreary and hilly realm, as well as Mordor. Hiisi also gave life to a huge snake guarding the entrance to Pojhola and helping him in the fights against the good (Vlčková 1999, 104) as well as Sauron creatures served to their master in the battles against his enemies.

3.3. The Goblins

Goblins, or Orcs as explained below, are the largest group of servants of the evil leaders. They are the most developed group of evil characters, consisting of several

tribes and experiencing noticeable development in the work of Professor Tolkien. Following the characters of goblins in literature, they can be found already in very old sources. Originally, a term goblin was used for all faeries in general. Wirt Sikes starts his study about the fairy mythology called “British Goblins” by writing about faeries and in the fourth paragraph he mentions goblins in almost the same meaning as faeries without any explanation. Internet encyclopaedia explains the origin of goblins following way:

“A somewhat more plausible idea relates goblins back to the almost-forgotten fairy figure of Ghob, the King of the Gnomes. In Old English, the earth-spirits who followed him might well have been referred to as ‘Ghoblings’” (Fisher 2008, 1).

At this point a poem from 1915 “Goblin Feet” by J. R. R. Tolkien can be mentioned as an illustration that there was a long way in the work of this author until his characters reached their final form. In the poem from the time before Tolkien started creating his own mythology, he mentions several kinds of Anglo-Saxon ‘goblins’ like fairies, enchanted leprechauns, gnomes and describes their whirling, humming, padding feet, tinkly sounds, their noiseless little robes and little happy feet (Čudrnáková 2008, 113). This shows that the idea of goblins being simply faeries was quite common. Recent sources consider goblins to be small mostly dark and hairy creatures with body construction of a human kind usually dressed and wearing some kind of cap. They are not classified as completely evil but more troublemakers. In English mythology they are known as Hobgoblins and one definition describes them as quoted from “Faerie Land”:

“The English Hobgoblin loves to live in homes where he makes much trouble for the people who live there. Some others reside in mines where they search for treasure/trouble. Still others of the family prefer grottos, often residing in the same one for their entire life.” (Faerie Land 2007).

These goblins are of various kinds and the ones who do not live in people’s houses or in mines can dwell in cemeteries digging out bones and scatter them around. Goblins similar to this kind can be found in Tolkien’s *Father Christmas Letters*. The goblins in this book are small and black, live on the North Pole and once a time they appear digging tunnels into Father Christmas’ house and stealing presents prepared for children. They are not really violent; however, there were some fights between them and Father Christmas’ dwarves, as Father Christmas often complained. Letter by letter

the fights between goblins and Father Christmas' dwarves were getting worse until Tolkien was interrupted in his writing by the war. In the later stages a shift towards *The Hobbit* or *The Silmarillion* was obvious, as Rosebury claims:

“The later Letters reach out occasionally and tentatively towards Middle-earth: tunnel-dwelling, bat-riding goblins attack the North Pole, and one of Father Christmas's elves is called ‘Ilbereth’, but both elves and goblins are conventionally diminutive” (2003, 125)

Before moving to the final form of Tolkien's goblins, another usage of the goblin character can be listed. Under the Christian influence in the Middle Ages, goblins were often identified with evil spirits and demons of Satan. Čudrnáková mentions this case quoting from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: “Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned, / Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell.” (quoted in Čudrnáková 2008, 112) When Hamlet sees his father for the first time, he calls him “goblin damned” in the meaning of a creature from hell.

In the *LR* Tolkien moved away from children literature and started to focus on adult audience. This changed the goblins too. In the *LR* the author uses both terms goblin and Orc for this kind of creatures, which represents a problem in translations. What Tolkien writes to this topic in his foreword to *The Hobbit*, where he used primarily the term goblin, is following: “Orc is not an English word. It occurs in one or two places but is usually translated goblin (or hobgoblin for the larger kinds). Orc is the hobbits' form of the name given at that time to these creatures.” (Tolkien 1995, 1). This is the fictive explanation which still counts with the fact that a reader should believe that the stories of Professor Tolkien are based on a real history or mythology. In his *Letters* Tolkien gives more credible hint when saying that the Orcs do not come from his own experience and his image is probably based to great extent on traditional goblins (Čudrnáková 2008, 111). A search for the etymology of the words ‘Orc’ and ‘goblin’ can help to reveal the meaning as well. As Rearick writes, the origin of the word ‘Orc’ can be found in a vocabulary from the eleventh-century manuscript, *Cotton Cleopatra A.III*: “[T]he Latin word "orcus" (one of the names for Pluto, God of the Underworld, as well as just "death") is glossed "orc, fyrs, dde heldeofol" ("orc, giant, or the devil of Hell") (Wright and Wülcker 1.459)” (Rearick 2004, 868). Furthermore he offers another origin of the word goblin in the word ‘gobelinus’ from the twelfth century and claims:

“The word "goblin" appears adapted from "Gobelinus," the name of a spirit reported in the twelfth century to be haunting the district of Évreux in Normandy. ... According to the Middle English Dictionary, the word has a range of meanings such as "a devil," "an incubus," or "an evil spirit.”” (Rearick 2004, 868).

Shippey offers other roots of the word ‘Orc’ considering the fact that Tolkien was inspired by the *Beowulf*, where a word ‘orc-neas’ appears. It is used as a plural and seems to mean demon-corpses (Shippey 1978, 88). Rearick explains the translation in larger detail, analyses the line 112 and writes that it “enumerates among the wicked descendants of Cain: "eotenas ond ylfe . . . ond orcneas" (giants and elves and animated bodies of the dead)” (Rearick 2004, 868). Some sources consider goblins to be subclass of orcs, being smaller and living usually in mountains. Although there are disputations about the origin of these words, most evidence lead to old mythology. Tolkien confused his readers concerning this problem, because in the *Hobbit* he uses mostly the term goblin while during writing *The LR* he changed his mind because his creatures became crueler, and started to use the word Orc to prevent mistaking his characters with goblins from old fairy-tales, who were not so evil. During years of writing the *LR* Tolkien made the situation more confusing by inconsistent backwards modification. Important thing is that these goblins or Orcs are of completely different character than the ones from the children literature.

Looking closely on Orc as a character in literature, sources can be found using the name Orc in a different meaning. A poet William Blake created a character named Orc who is a rebellious child of two of the first spirits (Colbert 2002, 103). As Ron Broglio describes in his article “William Blake and the Space of Revolution”: “on plate 4 the rebellious character Orc emerges from the Atlantic, demarcated by Blake as the space between America and Albion. Orc is the product of the irresolvable conflict between the two. “(Broglio 2006, 17). A name Orc here, although spelled with capital O could resemble Tolkien’s Orcs but the origin of both the character and his name is different. Adam Warren explains: “The name "Orc" is an anagram of "cor," Latin word for "heart," insinuating that revolution is a product of passion.” (Warren 2005, 1). Other hints, exploring the origin of Orc characters, lead to Native American legends of killer whales with Latin name ‘Orcinus orca’ that describe a sea monster in some stories being once a wolf that turned into a whale (Thunderbird 1991, 16). In the same meaning, the

word orc is found in an epic work from the sixteenth century by Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* translated by William Steward Rose: “The orc, that measureless sea-monster, hies, / Which on abominable food is fed.” (Ariosto 1995, CANTO 10 XCIV) In original: “quel smisurato mostro, orca marina / che di aborrevole esca si nutriva” (Ariosto 2003, CANTO DECIMO, 94) This branch of usage of the term ‘orc’ is more remote from the one which was followed by Tolkien, however a slight similarity can be again found. Orc, as a sea-monster is definitely considered an evil creature dangerous for other beings and its eating habits are similar to Tolkien's Orcs as well. Exploring goblins’ diet in the books about Middle-earth the result is also “abominable food”. Marjorie Burns deals with food of bad characters and claims that in the stories about the Middle-earth, good creatures eat well and the evil eat badly. As an example she mentions the situation from the *LR* when Pippin rejects the meat thrown to him by an Orc because he has no idea where it comes from (Burns 2005, 165). To add more horror to his characters, Tolkien described Orcs, as well as for example Shelob or Sauron, not only eating bad things but also enjoying the pain their victims suffer for before being eaten. As well as Orcs regret that the hobbits must not be hurt before delivery and thus, they have no chance to play with them, Shelob is known not to eat dead meat or suck cold blood, she wants her victims alive and wants to play with them (Burns 2005, 165). Concerning Sauron the situation is much similar as shown in the *Return of the King*, when the Black King says to Eowyn: “...he will not slay thee in thy turn. He will bear thee away to the houses of lamentation, beyond all darkness, where thy flesh shall be devoured” (quoted in Burns 2005, 165).

The matter of devouring one's victim is quite common element in Tolkien's work about the Middle-Earth and also some hints prompting the idea of cannibalism appear. As Burns describes, Orcs eat not only horses or ponies but also much more horrible things so even two-legged creatures are in danger. In *The Hobbit* the idea of eating men or hobbits was expressed still in more or less humorous way, while in the *LR* this theme is developed into more frightening situations. For example, Saruman talks about awarding his fighting Orcs with human flesh. The speech of Orcs is full of hints to eating their victims: “You are cooked. The Whiteskins will catch you and eat you.” (Tolkien 2001, 442) says the Isengard Orc to his rivals. Moreover their sentences sometimes mention even Orc-eat-Orc behaviour: “You must go or I'll eat you.” (Tolkien

2001, 885), threatens an Orc Shagrat to another one, Snaga. Another quote from the *LR* documents suspicion of cannibalism concerning Orcs: “It’s orc-flesh they eat.” (Tolkien 2001, 436), comments Grishnákh the habit of the Uruk-hai. The question is, whether the characters say this only to terrify the enemy or if eating its own kind is a common Orc habit. Not only from their speech but also from their deeds can be realized that Orc-eat-Orc behaviour is not loathsome for them. After Shagrat cut the throat of another Orc he licks his blade.

The more cruel goblins or Orcs from the *LR* have a part of their origin in evil creatures from old Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon literature which was more serious than fairy-tales listed above. Concerning the treatment with victims an Old English heroic epic poem *Beowulf* can be mentioned. The main evil character Grendel as described in a study of T. A. Shippey is “cannibalistic monster, who ... drink[s] blood, snap joints, devour feet and hands like man-eating tiger.” (Shippey 1978, 10). As already written, Tolkien often describes the goblins in a realistic detailed way, and the reader knows about their cruelty mostly from their speech. As Tolkien writes, when they speak they make the Common Speech almost as hideous as their own language (invented by Tolkien himself) (Tolkien 2001, 435). The voices of Orcs are raw and unpleasant, they scream sharp during battles and speak without love to words and things (Čudrnáková 2008, 107). As orcs speak with their prisoners they use sentences like “If I had my way, you’d wish you were dead now. ... I’d make you squeak, you miserable rat” (Tolkien 2001, 435) and when Gorbag, an Orc from *The LR* realizes that the prisoners should be stripped, he immediately asks: “Stripped, eh? ’ said Gorbag. ‘What, teeth, nails, hair and all?” (Tolkien 2001, 723). The problem with the Orcs is that they do not even understand the languages of other tribes and that leads to the misunderstanding ending with assaulting their own kind. As Chance mentions, when Pippin wakes up after being kidnapped, he perceives that more kinds of Orcs argue and do not understand one another’s language. The inability to solve the problem also causes a fight with fatal consequences (Chance 2004, 216). According to Shippey, Grendel also “represents death, or troublemaking, or the body of Satan, “(Shippey 1978, 41) and also calls him with support of the original terms from the saga “enemy of mankind, God’s adversary, prisoner of hell.” (Shippey 1978, 42). Tolkien’s Orcs are in the book always considered enemies of mankind with addition of other peoples as

Hobbits, Elves and Dwarves. Another thing, which Grendel and the Orcs have in common, is the special quality of their blood. The blood of Tolkien's Orcs is black while Grendel's blood is corrosive and blade melts in it. The same motive is observable in Tolkien's *LR* when a sword is pierced into a Black Rider: "all blades perish that pierce that dreadful King." (Tolkien 2001, 193). Moreover, Tolkien twisted this action when also the Black Rider's knife broke and melted after Aragorn inspected it: "the blade seemed to melt, and vanished like a smoke in the air, leaving only the hilt in Strider's hand." (Tolkien 2001, 193).

The main difference between the monsters of *Beowulf* and the Tolkien's ones is that Tolkien never uses womankind of goblin or Orc, while in *Beowulf* also Grendel's mother appears and the hero Beowulf must fight with her on the bottom of a swamp. In this fight, a sword is revealed to him by the Light of God. (Vlčková 1999, 44). Swords play an important role in fighting against Tolkien's Orcs as well, not in direct conflicts but also because of their supernatural quality; changing their colour when the enemy is close. Although women characters are in Tolkien's work relatively in minority there is no reason to blame Professor Tolkien of favouring men. Looking on his characters more closely, more figures with woman's attributes can be found. There are of course Goldberry, Eowyn or Galadriel but examining the character of some masculine figures, typically feminine features are present. The point is that Tolkien divided his characters in good and bad as well as feminine and masculine and these categories are more or less correspondent. As Burns claims, evil characters possess traditional masculine qualities as being brutal, disgruntled, contrary, defiant and devoted for battle and arms. Some of these attributes appear in the characters from the Fellowship as well but those who possess them, for example Boromir, are not considered heroes in the highest degree (Burns 2005, 131). On the other hand, good persons as Elves or Hobbits are described as emotional, sensitive, sympathetic, in case of Elves even beautiful, and not really willing to use force and violence. These characteristics are traditionally considered more feminine. Although Tolkien was brought up in a male environment, since his mother died when John was twelve, it is apparent from his work that despite omitting women characters, he valued their qualities. Thus, the characters who are considered the best personalities of their kind have a combination of masculine and feminine qualities in balance. This feature also connects the two mythological sources, the Norse and the

Celtic, since the Norse qualities were traditionally masculine and Celtic positives were seen in emotional approach and nervous exaltation. As Burns concludes: “ For Tolkien true heroism is reserved for those who embody all that is best in humankind, the best of Nordic determination and Celtic sensitivity, the best of male and female combined.” (Burns 2005, 131).

Going further in the search for possible inspiration of Tolkien's Orcs a story from the Icelandic *Edda* plays its role in its younger adaptations. A goblin guarding a treasure is mentioned in the *Nibelungenlied* under the name Alberich. This character appeared only in the later Middle Ages version of the original story and in the first versions of the tale about Sigfried, the treasure is guarded by an evil gnome Andvari who was later transformed into Alberich. What is interesting in the original story is the fact that the treasure included magic rings that were to bring doom to their owner. This resembles the story of the One Ring in Tolkien's novels. The motive of the ring was again changed in the later version and Sigfried obtained from the goblin a magic helmet that enabled him to be invisible. Wagner in his opera version elaborated the topic of the ring even closer to the motive of the Ring in the stories about the Middle-earth and also used the topic of the small gnome or goblin, who was obsessed by the Ring, transformed and finally killed because of it (Carter 2002, 138-142). However, as already mentioned, Tolkien denies the inspiration in this story completely. It is difficult to study the matter of the Nibelungs because it was dealt with many times by many different authors who adapted the motives according to the historical context and the needs of the era they lived in.

In Tolkien's novels a development of the goblin-kind of characters can be clearly observed. Starting with trickster-like goblins and going on with evil goblins and Orcs suddenly the author decided that they are not evil enough and invented 'uruk-hai' and other tribes of Orcs. In the *LR*, the head of wizards Saruman, who was consumed by his obsession of power and turned to evil, started to hybridize Orcs with evil people from the South and gave birth to a special kind of Orcs who could travel by daylight, what normal goblins and Orcs could not, and were stronger and more cruel. In their behaviour a deviation from distinguishing what is good and bad is more observable. As Tom Shippey mentions in *Author of the Century*, they turn into greed, desire to dominate and spoiling and damaging everything including nature without any rational

intention to use it (Shippey, 2000, 171). Saruman's Orcs started to fell trees for the furnaces, but they end up felling them for fun, as Treebeard complains: "Down on the borders they are felling trees – good trees. Some of the trees they just cut down and leave to rot – orc-mischief that." (Tolkien 2001, 462). Tolkien as a linguist tried to distinguish the different tribes of Orcs even by using various styles of their speech. This fact also suggests that Tolkien's characters were not as flat as some critics claim. As Rosebury points out the comparatively cerebral Grishnâkh talks like "a melodrama villain, or public-school bully" (Shippey 2000, 81):

"My dear tender little fools ... everything you have, and everything you know, will be got out of you in due time: everything! You'll wish there was more that you could tell to satisfy the Questioner, indeed you will: quite soon. We shan't hurry the enquiry. Oh dear no! What do you think you've been kept alive for? My dear little fellows please believe me when I say that it was not out of kindness: that's not even one of Uglúk's faults." (Tolkien 2001, 445).

In comparison, the Uruk-hai, Grishnâkh's rivals are arrogant warriors. Their speech is brutal and full of hatred and they talk in rather underpowered way:

"The Black Pits take that filthy rebel Gorbag! ' Shagrat's voice tailed off into a string of foul names and curses. 'I gave him better than I got, but he knifed me, the dung, before I throttled him.' ... 'I'm not going down those stairs again, ' growled Snaga, 'be you captain or no. Nar! Keep your hands off your knife, or I'll put an arrow in your guts.'" (Tolkien 2001, 885).

In this extract also argument between different kinds of Orcs appears. Even among these evil creatures some kind of hierarchy and sometimes even respect or rather calculating pretended obedience is observable. The representation of different peoples by a different vocabulary or level of formality open the background of the characters more to the reader. As Rosebury writes: „[T]he aesthetic qualities of the invented tongues reinforce our sense of the cultural and even moral character of their habitual users.“ (Rosebury 2003, 26).

3.4 The Trolls

During centuries writers of fairy-tales, poems and people rewriting mythological tales used many different terms for their creatures and some words changed a meaning being used more times. In Tolkien's work the most commented ambiguity arose around the Orcs and goblins but in fact it was Tolkien, who tried to put these words into clear

concept describing the creatures in detailed scenes. For example in *Beowulf*, as Shippey adds, it was not only the plural 'orc-neas' which appeared but also a singular 'orc-pyrs', where the second part is found also in Old Norse and means giant. It seems that in old literature words like demons or giants were used freely without any clear referent and that for instance literate Anglo-Saxons had very little idea what orcs were at all (Shippey 2000, 88). Similar ambiguity can be observed around trolls who in Scandinavian literature, especially fairy-tales, are described similarly to Tolkien's goblins. They appear like small hairy creatures doing mischief to people and usually live in a forest. Translated from Swedish into English troll means goblin or the hobgoblin already mentioned. They are not really evil but sometimes similarity with Tolkien's goblins can be found. For example in a Swedish fairy-tale "Linafina och Tovalill" trolls used to eating people appear. Although they are more like tricksters, in one dialogue they discuss whether they will make a soup or rather a sausage of people approaching their place: "Människor! Pep lille minstingen Skrott. Nu får vi snart soppa, sa trollmostrarna förväntansfullt. Nej pölsa, sa trollfastrarna." (Bland Tomtar och Troll 1991, 99). In author's translation: "People! Shouted the small boy Skrott. Now, we will have soup, said aunt from mother's side excitedly. No, sausages, said troll aunt from father's side." From this extract one difference between Swedish trolls and Tolkien's monsters is observable as well. Trolls live in big families while goblins are only of one sex and reproduce themselves in not specified way. Of course, as already mentioned, Tolkien's Orcs were not created for children audience as the Swedish trolls so finally in the story of "Linafina och Tovalill" the old troll suggests that trolls and people should become friends which would not be possible with Tolkien's Orcs. Together with 'tomtar', which in translation from Swedish means almost the same as troll but in fairy-tales they are described more like dwarfs, trolls are typical characters for Scandinavian literature. Following the roots of trolls in Scandinavian mythology back to times before year 1000, they can be found in a form of giants as well. In old texts, trolls figured as evil ugly man-eating giants living in caves or mountains and after the dusk attacked travellers in want to rob or eat them. The Old Icelandic *Saga about Grettir* tells about a female armed giant who came at night to attack a main hero and jumped into a depth after being injured. People in the story also express the suspicion, that she wanted to run from the daylight and finally turned into a piece of stone (Čudrnáková 2008, 124-125).

These sources are already more related to the trolls of Professor Tolkien. In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo and his companions meet a group of three trolls, among them also one female. After capturing the hobbit and the dwarves into sacks, the trolls wanted to: “sit on the sacks one by one and squash them, and boil them next time.” (Tolkien 1995, 38). However, since the trolls in *The Hobbit* were not that clever, they were outwitted and forgetting about the Sun turned into stones after the dawn. This characteristic of Tolkien’s trolls is the same as of the troll from the saga about Grettir. The element of troll turning into stone can be found in few more Eddic poems, for example the song of Alvís and the poem about a hero Atli. The character Alvís is described as a dwarf but according to the speech of God Thor some hints of irony can be felt as he compares him with giants: “To a giant like | dost thou look, methinks;” (Bellows 1936, 185). Alvís is in the end of the song delayed by smart Thor’s talk until he is surprised by the daylight and turn into stone the same way as Tolkien’s trolls. Similar process appears with Atli who is laughing at a female giant Hríngerð, she gets herself involved in the argument, with the rise of the Sun turns into stone and Atli celebrates his victory (Čudrnáková 2008, 132-133). To compare the giants from Old Germanic legends and those from Tolkien’s stories, both can be seen as following: they are oversized, strong, evil, man-eating creatures, always willing to fight or rob but at the same time, it is not difficult to trick them. They usually live in mountains or caves and turn into stone on the daylight.

In the *LR* the trolls, as well as the Orcs, became crueler and when they appeared in the text, the comic elements from the *Hobbit* were not present any more. As Čudrnáková (2008, 122) describes, from the very dull creatures who could not speak at all, Sauron made trolls more dangerous, tricky, mean monsters using at least parts of Orcish language, although in a simple, filthy way. In the second part of the mentioned story about Grettir, the hero Grettir finds the cave of the trolls, kills one of them and reveals some skeletons. In this tale, the monsters are not called trolls anymore and the word ‘jotunn’ (man-eating giant) is used. The inconsistency in using terms for certain characters is quite common feature of old sagas and mythical stories. Thus, it also becomes clearer that troll was in fact a giant. In Old Icelandic *Edda*, giants are quite common characters. According to Germanic cosmology, the first giant Ymi is the ancestor of all giants but also men, Gods and the whole world. Ymi created the first beings from himself. After that he was killed and the descendents of another branch of

birth, from cow Audhumla who was feeding Ymi with her milk, gave birth to the whole cosmos from the parts of Ymi's body (Čudrnáková 2008, 127-128). The original followers of Ymi are referred to as 'thursar' and this word is connected with the term 'pyrs' (or thyse) from *Beowulf* as explained above. In the beginning of Tolkien's imaginary universe, it was not giants but Valar who created the world and giants had no significant role in those times. In comparison with the giants from *Edda*, they are rather simple minded aggressive creatures. In the *LR*, they are not used that much and no details about them are dealt with. Tolkien also keeps their origin hidden and unclear. In the *Edda*, they have more important role and the stories are rich on their fights with the Gods and another adventures. The shared characteristic of both Eddic and Tolkien's giants is that they tend to the evil side and are considered the enemies of mankind. The connection of the Eddic giants with the world of dead is supported for example by the fact that going to the final battle of Kangaroo, giants use a ship made of dead people's nails (Čudrnáková 2008, 134). Also the places where the giants live is significant for both Eddic and Tolkien's giants. It is a tradition of most European myths (Greek, Roman, Celtic) that giants live in inhospitable places as mountains, Northern areas or underground. Eddic giants' dwelling was at the border of the world of men – Midgard, in the North and East (Vlčková 1999, 163) while Tolkien's trolls lived in the North or in caves, under stones and in forests. They were divided into Hill-trolls, Cave-trolls, Snow-trolls and Stone-trolls. Moreover, as well as Orcs were hybridized into Uruk-hai, trolls were also improved into a stronger and Sun resistant Olog-hai. Similar division can be found in Norse mythology as well, since there appeared already mentioned 'jotunn' as men-eating giants or for example 'bergrisar' as mountain giants (Čudrnáková 2008, 130). Mountains are generally often connected with the Eddic giants since for example rocks are sometimes called the path of giants (Čudrnáková 2008, 133). However, the characters of giants in Old Norse mythology are not that clear and obvious as in Tolkien, because who once appear as a giant can act in another story in human size. Another example of confusion concerns a girl from one episode who was afraid to be left to giants and finally reveals to be a daughter of giants herself. Not even the ugliness of Eddic giants is that consistent and Gods sometimes struggle for the affection of giants' daughters. The Eddic giants were mighty beings, represented natural forces, could turn into animals, gave birth to monsters and sometimes had more heads

than one. Only one comment about multi-headed giants is made in the *Hobbit* but it can be more or less taken as a joke. There is a note that certain behaviour is common for trolls, even for those who have only one head, but in all stories of Middle-earth, trolls do not have more heads than one (Čudrnáková 2008, 134). In *The Beowulf*, giants are mentioned as well by the word 'eotenas' meaning men-eating giants. More than the description, the terms used there are important since a word derived from 'eotenas' appear in the names of places where the trolls or giants lived according to *The Silmarillion* - Ettendales and Ettenmoors (Čudrnáková 2008, 130).

Other mythical sources where giants appear are the Finnish *Kalevala* or old Celtic myths. The main hero of the epos *Kalevala*, Kaleva was called "gigans mythologicus, pater gigantium" (Čudrnáková 2008, 135) which means 'mythological giant, father of giants'. He was the founder of Finnish nation, thus at the beginning of Finnish history the giants were important too, as it was in the *Edda*. However, the giants from *Kalevala* are not considered portrayals of senseless strength. They are more similar to the giants who created the world in Eddic stories than to the later Germanic giants or trolls from Tolkien's *LR*. Their appearance in the epic is not that frequent. They usually live underground as well but when they have a role in certain story, it is a role of ancient mighty creatures who possess power and wisdom. They also represent magical forces of the Earth (Čudrnáková 2008, 136). Despite their more noble position in the myths, they are known to eat people as well as giants from *Edda* or Tolkien's Middle-earth. In Celtic myths, the giants are mostly just a flavouring of other stories as well as it happens in Tolkien's *LR* and they can be compared to the Middle-earth giants also in other aspects. They were again, in opposition to Gods and all good beings. The best known giants from Celtic legends are the Fomorians, who were a race of formidable giants, the aboriginal inhabitants of Ireland. They were a threat to early civilizing invaders and their appearance was quite specific. Some of them are described as having the head of goat and the body of man, however certain sources consider the 'Goatheads' (Gobarchinn) a separate race (Eyres 2007, 192). Some of the Fomorians had only one eye, as their chieftain described in the chapter about the Evil Leaders. Others could have no head and mouth placed in the chest and some had a shape as normal humans. As well as in the Eddic stories the element of a giant marrying the enemy appears in Celtic legends, which suggests that not all of them were completely

ugly and evil. As well as the Eddic giants fight against the Gods in Ragnarök and Tolkien's trolls join the army of evil in the final battle of the Pelennor Fields, the Fomorians act in the final great battle with Tuatha Dé Danann, Celtic Gods. Cuchúlain, a famous Irish hero also got into a conflict with a giant in legends. This monster, however, appeared in the end of the story as honest and thanks to him Cuchúlain earned the reputation of a brave man. The giant enters to the feast hall and asks for a hero who is able to chop his head off under the condition that the giant cuts the head of the man the following day in return. Cuchúlain accepts this deal, cuts giant's head; he takes his head and leaves the hall. Next day, the giant comes back to cut Cuchúlain's head and when he does not protest; the giant finally does not hurt the hero and proclaims him the bravest man of Ireland. This moral aspect can never be found in Tolkien's giant's behaviour. Celtic giants were also sometimes guardians of magical objects or treasures which can be said about Tolkien's trolls, at least those from the *Hobbit*, as well because they gathered a treasure during their robberies. Giants as enemies of mankind appear more in later legends and fairy-tales inspired by Celtic matter, as for example in Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, where Sir Lancelot defeats many giants armed with mauls and rescues virgins from a castle (Čudrnáková 2008, 138).

Giants are well known not only from old mythological stories but also from folk fairy-tales and chevalier stories of all times. In the traditional fairy-tales of the Grimm brothers, the main hero often needs to overpower a giant who guards an important entrance or special item. In the Middle-Ages epic the *Nibelungenlied*, the hero Sigurd defeats troops with twelve strong giants or in another confrontation, overpowers a giant gardening a castle. Another famous giant-enemy was the knight Dietrich from Bern. (Čudrnáková 208, 135). The giants from these pieces of literature do not play an important role in the stories and serve usually as a source of the main hero's victory. A giant of this kind can be found in another tale from Professor Tolkien, the *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and is described as funny, not very clever being. As most of giants, he lives at the boarder of mountains. Not only was he particularly unwise but also hard of hearing and seeing. He is called giant not troll and it seems that after broadening the stories of Middle-earth, Tolkien needed new terms to distinguish increasing number of different kinds of giants and that might be why he used the term troll from Scandinavian literature in his later work.

3.5. *The Non-dead*

Another group of Sauron's helpers, not significantly high in number but important in meaning, are the Ringwraiths. Being once proud kings, the nine Black Riders are hunted by their lust for the rings thanks to which they were betrayed and enslaved. After dwelling between the life and dead they were called to the dark lord Sauron in his service to find the One Ring that appeared after being lost. As Orcs are the counterpart of Elves, Ringwraiths are the opposite of men. They lost the most characteristic feature of a human being the heroic identity and remained dark riders being driven by a deceitful evil power (Zimbardo 2004, 72). Black Riders are thus a total contradiction to the heroes from the *LR*. The lost identity is also represented by their appearance since they are faceless and under their black coats only an empty space appears instead of head. Their most powerful weapon was their awesomeness, the scary voice and the impossibility to be harmed by ordinary weapons (Čudrnáková 2008, 182-183).

The characters of Ringwraiths or Nazgûls in Orc-Speech are quite specific and come from the imagination of Professor Tolkien however, the idea of men who are neither alive nor dead is common in tradition of many cultures of the world. The motive of afterlife in *The Edda* is described as following: those who lose their life in battle can pass away to the halls of Valhalla where they enjoy fun in friendly fights, eat and drink the best what can be offered. They wait till the end of the world – Ragnarök, to join the army of Gods and fight in the final battle against giants and other evil creatures. This destiny concerns only those who were good and brave but at the same time the death in a battle was a necessary condition. Similarly to *Edda*, the motive of waiting in the halls of Mandos and waiting for the end of the world and renewal of Arda appears in *The Silmatillion*. For those who die another way than the warriors go in the Eddic stories to Hel and although they were not bad, their placement after death is described as very unpleasant. Together with Hel the Nifhel is mentioned as a place for those who were really evil during their lives. The place for the worst of evildoers remains after Ragnarök and they cannot find rest:

“I saw there wading / through rivers wild / Treacherous men / and murderers too, /
And workers of ill | with the wives of men; / There Nithhogg sucked / the blood

of the slain, / And the wolf tore men; / would you know yet more?“ (The Poetic Edda 1936, 17)

The elements of treachery being a sin and not letting those who committed it rest, appears with Tolkien's dead men of Dunharrow, who could not die before fulfilling the failed swear (Čudrnáková 2008, 192). The most important feature concerning the Ringwraiths is their rings that caused their suffering between the death and life. The idea of gold or wealth causing damage or bad luck to its owner appears in the Northern mythology on several places, for example in the story of Sigurd or mythical king Fródi, who used his magic grinder for producing gold and good luck too often until he was robbed and finally died because of the slaves who were in charge of operating the grinder (Vlčková 1999, 95-96). In these stories, as well as in the story of the Ringwraiths, the owners of pressures things suffer from their own greed. In the Finnish tales there are stories about the restless souls of the dead, some of them being dark wraiths riding horses and reminding of the Black Riders from the *LR*. (Čudrnáková 2008, 201).

The elements of mounds, lakes, swamps or marshes inhabited by underworld creatures can be found also in Celtic myths as well as dead warriors waiting to be called from the afterlife to fight again. A picture resembling the Black Riders is described in a story when the originally good creatures Sidhe, appear as bad ghosts and their description is similar to the Ringwraiths. They are portrayed as ghost sitting on their horses having dim face, the knights dressed in black coats wearing helmets and being surrounded by mist protecting them from Sun which hurts them (Čudrnáková 2008, 203-204).

The Barrow-Wights were another neither living nor dead creatures of Middle-earth as well as the already mentioned dead men of Dunharrow or the dead from the Dead Marshes, however these kinds of creatures were not directly governed by the dark lord. The term Barrow-Wights is connected with *The Beowulf* since the word 'beorh' is used in the poem. In Old English it meant 'a peak', usually a burial mound. It is also common in the tales of many nations that the place where the non-dead appear are mountains, exactly as the Barrow-Wights. The living dead from the Old Icelandic sagas were usually stronger and mightier than during their lives as well as Tolkien's dead men of Dunharrow. In his *Letters*, Tolkien mentions a nineteenth century writer and artist

William Morris, who served him as a source for the living dead from hills and swamps of Middle-earth. This author was as well as Tolkien interested in the stories from the Northern Europe, adapted them for readers of his time and in the book *A Tale of the House of the Wolfings* wrote about the warriors buried in a mound, waiting there ready to help their nation (Čudrnáková 2008, 194-196).

Except of the Ringwraiths, Sauron was supported also by the dark people from Harad, and the Easterlings were also considered to belong to the evil part in the elder days. These tribes were tricked by Sauron by the promise of wealth and consequential threatening. These groups of enemies are not closely specified but the East, and earlier the North, was, as already mentioned, in the stories about the Middle-earth considered as a place where the enemies usually came from. Harad is the exception placed in the South. This feature can be observed in Finnish *Kalvala*, where it was the North and the Northern demonic people from Pojhola, the land of everlasting darkness, as a source of most problems for ordinary folk. Their land was, as well as in Tolkien, described as wasteland and was inhabited by huge snakes and other monsters (Vlčková 1999, 176-177). The non-dead demons or ghosts are neither the invention of Professor Tolkien nor of the European tradition and it is possible that they appear in myths of many cultures, however some pictures from the Northern myths are similar to Tolkien's characters and considering his interest in these stories, fractional inspiration can be conceded.

3.6. *The Balrogs*

Shippey claims that in the *LR* the Orcs “are relatively low-ranking evil-doers, what Tolkien called in his *Beowulf* lecture ‘the infantry of the old war’; and in some ways they resemble fairly conventional fairy-tale images” (Shippey 2000, 121). The same can be claimed about trolls or other members of Sauron's army. However, there are worse things than goblins in Tolkien's Middle-earth. In arguments among Orcs when there seems to be no other way to arrange order, Orcs threaten to one another with more powerful creatures: “Come here, and I'll squeeze your eyes out, like I did to Radbug just now. And when some new lads come, I'll deal with you: I'll send you to Shelob.” (Tolkien 2001, 885). From their experience Orcs show some respect at least to

the monsters dangerous to them. These creatures, although on the side of evil, do not need to respect the rules of higher powers and exist on their own.

The character of Balrog is not typical in old fairy-tales or myths and seems to be completely imagined by J. R. R. Tolkien. However, being the Demons of Power and spirits of fire, their model can be found further to the history as well. With its huge size, strength and weapons, a fire whip of many thongs or fiery sword, these monsters started in service of Morgoth as well. They were the most dreadful of Melkor's servants who stayed faithful to him also after his transformation into the evil lord; no arm could harm them while almost no one could stand the power of their whip. During the Wars of Jewels, described in the *Silmarillion*, most of them were destroyed including their lord Gothmog and for next centuries, they seemed to be completely exterminated from the Middle-earth. In the *LR* the hidden danger realized only by Gandalf appears in the mines of Moria and the reader learns how greedy Dwarves dug too deep and woke up one of the Balrogs sleeping deep underground. At this place of the book, he appears already as an independent evil being not lead by any master, living with the Orcs and trolls, who were governed by him and feared him as a more powerful evildoer (Tyler 2002, 56). When the Balrog enters: "The Orcs themselves were afraid and fell silent." (Tolkien 2001, 319). It could not be obviously claimed that Tolkien was influenced by any particular demon of fire from old mythological sources; however, there is one monster in Icelandic *Edda* that could be compared to Tolkien's Balrogs as a possible source or inspiration. The boarder of the lands of fire in the South, Múspellheim, is guarded by a giant called Surt. His name means 'black', or 'bad' and his special role comes during the Ragnarök, when he leads the warriors of Múspell to the final battle against the Gods. With his fiery sword stolen to the Gods he kills the God Frey who does not have his own sword and cannot defeat himself. Surt also has a very important role in the end of the world since he scorches it with his flame. Surt is a giant of underworld and fire and his real origin is unsure. It can be either a character from Celtic mythology or Iceland with a connection to Icelandic volcanoes (Vlčková 1999, 213). Later, this character was also linked to the Angel of the Last Judgement, hell and the end of the world by the Christians. The thing that Surt resembles in Balrog Gothmog is the fact that they both are surrounded by fire, have a powerful fiery weapon, lead the evil troops to a battle and while Surt is called 'black' the Balrogs were also described as

accompanied by a black shadow hovering around them. When Surt leads his warriors to the last battle of good and evil, a bridge Bifröst collapses after he passes. The motive of a falling bridge can be seen in the *LR* as well, during the fight of Balrog and Gandalf. (Čudrnáková 2008, 251). The idea that Balrog was partly constructed upon the model of Eddic fire giant is also supported by the fact that Tolkien was particularly concerned with this topic. Tolkien studied an Old English poem “Exodus” from approximately eighth century by an unknown author, sometimes attributed to Caedmon. His interest in this poem was raised by the hypothesis that the author, as well as the author of *Beowulf*, had some knowledge about the pre-Christian mythology. The poet mentions “the land of the Sigelware” (Sigelhearwa), mostly translated as Ethiopia. Tolkien claimed that this translation is a mistake and the word consists in fact of three words meaning ‘sun’, ‘jewel’ and ‘soot’ and connected it in the word with the meaning of ‘fire giant’. Considering the age in which the poem was written, Tolkien suggested that the ‘Sigelhearwa’ do not mean the Ethiopians but ‘sons of Múspell’, the land of fire giants. These thoughts come from times before the Balrog was introduced in *The Silmarillion* (Bramlett 2003, 130-131).

The main evil character from the saga *Beowulf*, Grendel has no common features with Balrogs concerning fire but considering his other attributes and the fact that Tolkien was concerned with this epos to a high extent, a comparison of these two monsters can be a well foreshadowed. In *Beowulf*, Grendel is not described in detail but he is pictured as a monster with humanoid figure but gigantic proportions. As he is pictured on several places of the poem, terms like the ‘enemy from hell’, ‘dark shadow of death’, ‘prisoner of hell’ are used. These nicknames suit to the character of Balrog as well, moreover the translation of imaginary elvish word Balrog – the Demon of Power corresponds with meaning of the name given to Grendel as well. (Čudrnáková 2008, 252). Although Grendel is not a fiery monster itself, in the description of his fights the features resembling Balrog can be observable: “But the evil one ambushed old and young / death-shadow dark, and dogged them still, / lured, or lurked in the livelong night / of misty moorlands.” (Beowulf 1910, Part II.) The ‘death-shadow dark’ resembles the description of the Balrog in the *LR*: “It was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it.” (Tolkien 2001, 321). When Grendel is

described during the fight he is approaching in the dark with the eyes burning with flames. Beowulf fights this monster with bare hands because he knows that no weapons can harm him as well as Balrog cannot be harmed by any men's arms. After Beowulf defeats Grendel, he has to fight his mother who lives in dark misty opening where every night a frightening flame appears on the surface of water. Beowulf defeats the monster with a magical sword although his companions consider him already dead. After he comes back among them it is as if he resurrected (Čudrnáková 2008, 254). The story of defeating the monster also resembles Balrog's defeat strongly. Gandalf wins the conflict thanks to his magical skills and comes back to the fellowship who were already wailing his death.

3.7. The Dragons

Dragons as a traditional fairy-tale and mythical element are the most notable representatives of the animal-kind of monsters from Middle-earth. A dragon as an enemy of whole kingdoms appear in the folk tradition of many countries very often but concerning Tolkien, again the Germanic mythology, the Finnish *Kalevala* and *The Beowulf* are important sources for his writing. Tolkien met the old Germanic tale of Sigurd already in his childhood in *The Red Fairy Book* and later he expressed his fascination with dragons that lead to his early literary try at the age of seven, when he wrote his own story about a dragon. Further, the character of dragon appeared in his early fairy-tale for children *Farmer Giles of Ham*, where a farmer outwits a man-eating dragon Chrysophylax and reaches his treasure. In *The Hobbit*, a dragon Smaug becomes one of the main characters of the story and in the *LR* the focus moved from a dragon to other monsters and the topic of big fire-spitting reptiles was significantly weakened. In *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien dealt with the matter of dragons again in more serious context resembling old mythology rather than fairy-tales. In the Middle-earth there were more kinds of dragons, some had the ability of flying or spitting fire, some resembled big snakes. Shaping his dragons, Tolkien respected even the philological roots of these creatures and since one of the explanations of the word 'dragon' is the development from the Greek 'dérkesthai' with the past form 'drakein' meaning 'to have a clear sight', the strength of Tolkien's dragons were sharp eyes too. The two main kinds of

Tolkien's dragons are called 'fire-drakes' and 'cold-drakes', the names being compounded from an old term for a dragon – 'drake'. Further, dragons are often called 'worms' in Tolkien's fiction and this has a connection to a Germanic mythical reptile Midgarsormr, where 'ormr' means in Old Norse 'reptile' (Čudrnáková 2008, 170-172). The dragons in Germanic legends also had the appearance of snakes. The linguistic perfection also shows that Tolkien, at least in his later work, approached the dragons seriously and in comparison with the traditional fairy-tales they were not only simple monsters gathering gold and kidnapping kings' daughters.

A mythical source which is approved by Professor Tolkien himself is *The Beowulf*. Although Tolkien claims that comparing two stories of literature can be confusing, there are features in *Beowulf* that significantly resemble the dragons from Tolkien's fiction. In the second part of the poem, Beowulf fights a fiery dragon, which attacks the Geats because someone stole a golden chalice from his treasure (Vlčková 1999, 44). The motive of a stolen cup from dragon's hoard is repeated in *The Hobbit*, when Bilbo takes a cup from Smaug's cave. In both stories, the cup is taken secretly through a hidden passage to a sleeping dragon. In *The Beowulf*, both the hero and the dragon die and the dragon's body is thrown into the sea in the end. In *The Hobbit*, there is also a dead hero, the leader of the dwarves Thorin Oakenshild and the dead dragon's body ends in a lake. A common part of these two stories is also the way of killing the dragon, namely taking the advantage of dragon's only weak part of the body – the soft belly (Tolkien 1999, 211).

Another story where a dragon appears is the already mentioned tale of Sigurd. This story can be found in *Elder Edda*, later versions appeared in the *Völsunga Saga*, Germanic *Nibelungenlied* and also in the Snorri's *Edda* (Čudrnáková 2008, 175-176). The dragon Fafnir was born as a man and after an argument that is not important for this comparison turned into a dragon and guarded a treasure that did not originally belong to him. Finally, he was killed again by piercing the soft belly by a sword. Before death the dragon leads a long conversation full of riddles and warnings with its rival (Vlčková 1999, 64-65). The motives from this story are again similar to the story from *The Hobbit*. Except of having the soft belly, the dragon guarding the golden treasure speaks with Bilbo who uses riddles while the dragon warns him against the destructive power of gold. As Bramlett notes, Tolkien admitted in a letter to the writer Naomi Mitchison in

1949 this source of inspiration: “[T]he idea of “Smaug and his conversation” came from the story of the dragon Fáfnir in the Norse epic *Saga of the Volsungs*. See Carpenter, *Letters*, 134.” (2003, 115) The story about the dragon Glaurung, also called the Big Worm, and Túrin Turambar from *The Silmarillion* also flavours the Sigurd’s story, particularly in the last scenes: “ Then he drew Guthang, and with all the might of his arm, and of his hate, he thrust it into the soft belly of the Worm, even up to the hilts.” (Tolkien 1994, 267). The hero Túrin dies as well and his people moan for him at the very end of the story.

In the Eddic stories, there are more dragons, usually described as sitting on the mounds of gold or stolen treasures. Other rather significant reptiles are Midgarsörm and Nidhögg. They are more snakes than dragons in the traditional imagination but since the word ‘draco’ was originally used for both snake and dragon and even, according to his own illustrations, Tolkien’s imagination of the dragon was more or less influenced by reptiles in general, these two creatures can also be mentioned here. Midgarsörm was a child of God Loki and a woman giant Angrboda and at the same time brother of Hel and wolf Fenri. This reptile coiled his body around the whole world and holds the tail in the mouth. His role comes during the Ragnarök when he fights side by side with his brothers for the evil part. In the end, he is killed by God Thor but the God dies as well killed by the reptile’s poison (Vlčková 1999, 122-123). Being the most important reptile acting in the final battle of the world, Midgarsörm can be compared to Tolkien’s Ancalagon the Black, the greatest of all dragons of the Middle-earth. Ancalagon also takes his part in the Great Battle between the Valar and Morgoth (Tolkien 2002, 20). As well as Morgoth is defeated, Ancalagon dies in this battle and for a long time, dragons disappear from the Middle-earth’s history. Nidhögg is an Eddic dragon or snake who causes damage to a holy ash tree Yggdrasil. He definitely belongs to the evil creatures as well, although this character does not have a reflection in Tolkien’s fiction. What can be highlighted at this place is the tree that could be a model for Tolkien’s Two Trees of Valinor planted in the holiest place of Arda. Finally, they are also poisoned and destroyed by evil and their light remains only in the stones Silmarils (Tolkien 2002, 653-654).

In *The Kalevala*, dragons are also described as oppressive monsters of villagers. Although they are not very common in this collection, there are a few mentions of huge

reptiles or snakes, for example one drinking beer from Finnish households and finally defeated by a wise old man. In Celtic stories, dragons appear as guardians of treasures or gates. The presence of dragons in Celtic mythology is rather interesting because there were no snakes in Ireland that could influence people's imagination and help creating dragons. Heroes like Conall Cernach, Froech of Cuchúlain are confronted with a dragon mostly for reaching a guarded treasure. In the legends of King Arthur, fights between men and dragons are described as well. Other dragons appear in the stories from the Middle Ages and from the chevalier adventures they came to the coats of arms of many noble families. In these stories, dragons often had supernatural skills and their rival had to be smart enough to defeat them. This can be seen in the character of Tolkien's dragons as well. They were considered clever, although not wise because they possessed also the temper of being vain, hypocritical, and greedy. As described in *The Hobbit*, the dragons could almost hypnotise their rivals and deceive them with smart talks twisting the truth into a lie (Tolkien 1999, 209). Although, the dragons differ in various sources, the main idea of this mythical character is quite clear considering both appearance and character. In comparison with the goblins or trolls, the concept of a dragon has its clear form. Tolkien's dragons follow the tradition of Germanic reptiles but it cannot be easily stated which concrete characters served as a source for his writing. He took some attributes from the Eddic monsters and some other features omitted, as well as he added elements of his own imagination (Čudrnáková 2008, 177-179).

3.8. The Evil Animals

In the lands of Mordor, not only goblins and trolls were in the service of the Dark Lord. Sauron hybridized several kinds of animals or gathered those who already existed from elder times. The cult of imagining animals with supernatural attributes, either dangerous and deadly or beautiful and helpful, is very common in the imagination of many cultures. Several religious views of the world, some of them preserving to the present times, were based on worshipping animals and pictured them in modified or glorified forms. As an example the Ancient Egyptian or present Indian culture can be named. Tolkien did not omit this strong source of inspiration and apart from the animals coming purely from his imagination, also animals based on old myths can be found.

In the chapter about Morgoth and Sauron, the werewolves and wargs were mentioned as their companions and helpers of goblins and Orcs. As well as the Balrogs transformed from the ghosts called Maiar in the times when Melkor turned to evil, werewolves stood on the evil side from the beginning and under Morgoth and later under Sauron caused a lot of suffering. In some stories, also Sauron could turn into a shape of a werewolf. In old tales, wolves were usually perceived as dangerous animals attacking sheep or even people. Moreover, in Europe the belief in the werewolves, people turning into wolves, spread also under the influence of Christianity, was very common. In the Middle Ages, wolves were perceived as Satan's servants and personifications of evil. Generally, in the tales about monster wolves, the characters were either animals with supernatural power or animal body possessed by a man's soul, ghost or demon. In European myths, the motive of human being turned into a wolf appears already in the Greek story about Lykaon, a mythical king who offered child flesh to Zeus and as a consequence was turned into a wolf. Further on, wolves as scavengers and evildoers are found in the Germanic mythology. According to the Eddic stories, an old woman-giant gives birth to many monster wolves in a forest in the East from Midgard. As well as Tolkien's wolves, the Eddic monsters are demons with wolves' bodies. Another feature resembling Tolkien's prose is the fact, that giants from *Edda* as well as Orcs used wolves for riding them. In the story of Beren and Lúthien narrated in *The Silmarillion*, a wolf Carcharoth swallows a gem Silmaril in which the holy light is bound. A story offering a source for this tale is found in the *Elder Edda*, when two giant werewolves Sköll and Hati drinking blood of dead people eat the Sun and the Moon. Carcharoth eats the stone after tearing Beren's hand and after this incident, Beren is called One-handed. The same happens in the tale about the wolf Freki, from *Snorri's Edda*, who bites off a hand of god Tý. Tý was after, as well as Beren, called the One-handed. Evil Freki is then bound into very strong magical chains Gleipni, similarly to Morgoth bound by the Gods with an enchanted chain Angainor after being defeated. In Celtic myths, female wolves are perceived as a symbol of maternity but on the other hand stories about dangerous or evil wolves appear as well. Humans changed into the body of wolves can be found in Welsh *Mabinogi*, where two brothers pay for their sins in a wolf shape (Čudrnáková 2008, 277-283).

Bats and vampires as blood-drinking monsters are also rooted in European imagination, although Tolkien dealt these characters carefully. As well as the Germanic Gods, Sauron or Morgoth could change their appearance and apart from the werewolves, bats was another form they used. In *The Silmarillion*, a women vampire Thuringwethil can be found as their helper and dangerous enemy of Elves and Men (Čudrnáková 2008, 270). A counterpart of this monster appears already in *The Elder Edda* where some women giants are referred to as vampires. In fact, the Eddic vampires are always female. The vampire form *The Silmarillion* is also a woman, however, she is the only vampire mentioned in Tolkien's prose.

Spiders are very powerful evildoers from Tolkien's Middle-earth and were probably, as well as Balrogs, transformed from the ghosts Maiar and after that joined Morgoth's evil army. The first awesome spider Ungoliant was the kind of evildoer who was independent of any leader and although she was in the service of Morgoth, finally turned against him as well. Chance compares her daughter Shelob to Satan's (Morgoth's) tricky cat and refuses the position of Satan's daughter who would be more obedient (2004, 215). The characters of giant spiders are not mentioned in mythological stories and their source is by most critics found in the experience with the spider in Tolkien's childhood or in author's own imagination. Almost the same can be written about the aggressive flies of Mordor, the only animals voluntarily living in this land. Their presence is not recorded in older sources. The nameless animal carrying the Ringwraiths on the back could have been, according to an evidence in Tolkien's *Letters*, modelled after the long time ago extinct pterodactyl (Čudrnáková 2008, 296), however the creation of this monster was not preceded by any scientific interest of Professor Tolkien in prehistoric times and the inspiration is rather peripheral. Similar source of inspiration could arise from various tales and myths about monsters living under water surfaces in lakes and seas and prompted the creation of a tentacular creature attacking Frodo before the entrance to Moria. Except of folk tales and superstitions about dangerous reptiles living in water in many countries, the Eddic snake Midgardsörm living in the sea and being stretched around the whole world or Kraken attacking soldiers from Northern tales can be also included in this group of creatures (Čudrnáková 2008, 298).

3.9. Other similarities of Tolkien's prose with mythological sources

Reading Tolkien's fiction, the reader can find other features in the structure reminding him of old sagas from Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon literature. *The Poetic Edda* or *Beowulf* are both written in verse and Tolkien wrote mostly in prose but his work is full of songs, riddles and poems accompanying the speech of characters. On the other hand, marching songs of Tolkien's goblins are funnier and not so serious. Especially in *The Hobbit* they were aimed at children:

“Swish, smack! Whip crack! / Batter and beat! Yammer and bleat! / Work, work! Nor dare to shirk, / While Goblins quaff, and Goblins laugh, / Round and round far underground / Below, my lad!” (Tolkien 1995, 58).

As Shippey suggests, Tolkien took not only characters and some aspects of the structure from the old literature but sometimes also settings. For example in *The Elder Edda* lines “úrig fiöll yfir, / pyr[s] a pióð yfir;” appear. The poem is about the God Freyr, who fell in love with a giantess, but that was not what Tolkien was interested in. He tended to seek more suggestions than ready words end names. Shippey translated the lines as following: “over the rainy mountains, / over the tribes of thyrses;” (Shippey 2000, 33). Further he claims that the word ‘úrig’ inspired Tolkien for the name Misty Mountains and that the tribes of ‘thyrses’ could be some kind of Orcs as already mentioned. Using the word ‘orc-pyrs’ he explains that ‘thyrses’ could mean the same as Orcs. Thus, in the chapter “Over Hill and Under Hill” in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien let Bilbo and his company cross the Misty Mountains and pass over the tribes of orcs (Shippey 2000, 32-33): “[W]ith a knowledge of the road they must follow over the Misty Mountains to the land beyond.” (Tolkien 1995, 51). “Out jumped the goblins, big goblins, great ugly-looking goblins, lots of goblins, before you could say *rocks and blocks*.” (Tolkien 1995, 56). As described already in the chapter about separate characters, the hints leading to myths appear on several places of Tolkien's prose. This fact also supports the theory that the similarities of Tolkien's fiction are not coincidental and that the deep studies of old mythology, considering either the subject matter or linguistics, left its marks in the world of Middle-earth.

4. Conclusion

After accepting the fact, that Tolkien was in construction of his evil characters inspired more by his interest in Northern literature and mythology than by simple facts from his life, the work of this well esteemed author can be appreciated in a proper extent. It is important to admit that it was not about simple copying of already invented matters and using it in new context. The biggest acknowledgement to Professor Tolkien belongs for the fact that he customized the concepts from rather unknown or mostly forgotten literature to the expectations of contemporary readers. Thus, the old matters become believable again and the interest about it rises. Moreover, the world of myths and fantasy is enriched by Professor's own imagination and as Čudrnáková claims, an ideal combination of myths, science, history, fantasy and the art of narration emerges (2008, 30).

Indeed, Professor Tolkien was definitely influenced by all experience from his life, however, the attitudes about possible allegories can be rejected after considering not only a part of criticisms but also primary sources from Tolkien's private letters and information from his close friends. C. S. Lewis claimed, although in a bit exaggerated way, that Tolkien could not be influenced by anyone and that one could more easily influence a steam roller than his friend Tolkien. During collective readings of one another's stories, Tolkien, according to Lewis, ignored any criticism or reacted by starting the whole work from the beginning (Carter 2002, 27). Tolkien himself kept refusing any allegoric intention, could it be general, specific, moral, religious or political, and claimed that the *LR* is about nothing else than itself. The reader is according to Tolkien, free from authors control and should try to apply rather history according to one's own experience than allegory according to author's intentions (Carter 2002, 79). Concerning the structure of Tolkien's novels, the most important thing was to picture the world of fantasy as much realistic, consistent and detailed as possible, since the biggest power of fantasy literature is making the reader believe that what he reads is real. In times of old myths, various cultures believed in the creatures or Gods mentioned there and that made the myths strong enough to endure for ages and being rewritten and retold several times they did not lose their popularity even in

today's world. Tolkien considers fantasy higher and not lower form of art and in the case when it is successfully realized, it is the purest and the most powerful one (Tolkien 1992, 155-156).

Considering the description of separate figures, the question is what can be counted on the list as a mythical character since some sources omit the animals or sometimes a wizard can be perceived as an ordinary human possessing special abilities. The border is not clear since in the time of old sagas and legends, there were no set rules or lists and the characters were formed continuously and sometimes on more places at the same time. Some prevailed, some changed and others disappeared. Among other creatures a discussion can arise whether they are good or evil. The time when these beings were used in various pieces of literature or only in oral narrations is very long and thanks to mixing cultures and translations from old languages, the meaning can sometimes be doubtful. Apart from a historical context, as for example the case of Christianity that transformed many pagan customs and turned some originally good creatures into demons and evil spirits (Čudrnáková 2008, 38); the inconsistency in using terms and names caused many ambiguities. This concerns for example the characters of trolls experiencing a long development from giants in Old Icelandic sagas to small gnomes from Scandinavia until Tolkien tried to put it in clearer concept for a present reader. The same happened with goblins and since even Tolkien confused the reader with continuous modification of his work, finally his own terms proved to be the best idea and in later writings Orcs are used instead of goblins. Other characters kept the original terms with Tolkien's conviction that it is better for the reader to accept the characters with incorrect associations than not at all (Čudrnáková 2008, 308). Despite that, Tolkien supplied his major novels *The LR* and *The Silmarillion* with very wide appendixes explaining most of the terms used. The scientific approach was proved also by the fact that Tolkien dealt any possible error or inconsistency in his work not as an author who made mistake but as a historian who is obliged to explain an obscurity in a historical document (Carpenter 1989, 12). Since all information about the Middle-earth are so complex and deep and were arising and being changed for many years, even Tolkien himself could not have manage to avoid mistakes or inaccuracies, which he admitted himself.

To conclude the topic of the mythological sources of Tolkien's prose, the primer inspiration appears to be the Icelandic *Edda* in its elder poetic or later prose form. The system of Eddic cosmology and the variety of Gods and monsters shows inconsiderable similarities with the stories about Middle-earth. Since the separate stories from *The Edda* were dealt with again many times in later pieces of literature, the same or similar characters can be seen in the story about Sigurd of the saga of Nibelungs, fragments of the tales from Germanic literature appear also in the Arthurian legends and in many literary works from the Middle-Ages. Apart from the Norse influence the Anglo-Saxon epos *Beowulf* or Celtic myths can be added to the group of Tolkien's sources of inspiration, especially concerning evil characters and monsters. *Kalevala* and later fairy-tales complete the list of documented origins of Tolkien's fantasy world. The influence can be seen not only in the characters, their appearance and roles in separate stories but also in linguistics, concerning the origin of particular words and names.

The natural system of using the subject matter from older sources and transforming it according to concepts of individual epochs continues and Tolkien is a part of it passing the motives and characters further. As an example can be named *The Gammage Cup* and its sequel *The Whisper of Glocken* by Carol Kendall, books that show strong inspiration by *The Hobbit* with its hobbit-like characters, goblin-like Hulks and swords that shine in presence of the enemy (Carter 2002, 169-170). Being inspired by older matters, raising the interest in it and passing it further makes Tolkien an unforgettable author connection the old and the new in the work possessing the qualities of erudition as well as entertainment.

Resumé

Tato práce se zaměřuje na představení hlavních inspiračních zdrojů Tolkienovy prózy, věnuje se především záporným postavám z děl o Středozemi a snaží se dokázat, že Tolkien vycházel v první řadě ze starých mytologických děl. Po první části, kde se snaží vyvrátit několik zažitých názorů o zdrojích především z Tolkienova života, popisuje jednotlivé záporné postavy, představuje jejich pravděpodobné předobrazy z mytologie a srovnává jejich charakter, vzhled a role v dílech.

J.R.R. Tolkien byl britský autor, který se proslavil především díky svým románům z žánru fantasy literatury *Hobit* a *Pán Prstenů*. Student na Oxfordské univerzitě a následně i profesor tamtéž se během svého života zabýval především studiem lingvistiky a literárních zdrojů. Studoval několik jazyků včetně staré angličtiny a skandinávských jazyků a jeho zájem v literatuře se také ubíral tímto směrem. Okomentoval například dílo *Pan Gawain a zelený rytíř* a po překladu anglosaského eposu *Beowulf* sepsal velmi známou přednášku na toto téma *Netvoři a kritikové*. Studium těchto oblastí na něm samozřejmě zanechalo vlivy, které se odrazily i v jeho vlastním díle.

I přes profesorovu nelibost se mnoho kritiků snažilo a stále snaží objasnit zdroje inspirace tohoto autora a v těchto snahách jde rozlišit několik základních proudů. Mnoho kritiků vychází z Tolkienova života jako ze stěžejního inspiračního zdroje a jeho dětství v Africe bývá často jmenováno jako důležitý aspekt ovlivňující jeho představivost. Někteří dokonce obviňují profesora Tolkiena z rasismu, protože jeho zlé postavy jsou vyobrazeny jako tmavé bytosti z jižních či východních zemí, zatímco vznešení elfové jsou vysocí a světlé pleti. Tento argument je podepírán prostředím, ve kterém Tolkien vyrůstal, kdy jeho rodina měla v domě v Africkém Bloemfontein domorodé služebnictvo. Tyto myšlenky jsou vyvráceny nejen doklady o tom, že Tolkienovo dětství neposkytovalo podmínky k zakořenění rasistických názorů, ale i odkazy na další literární díla, která používají černé a bílé vyobrazení zla a dobra bez jakýchkoli odkazů k rasismu.

Druhou větví názorů je spojování Tolkienova příběhu o Prstenu s křesťanským náboženstvím, kde někteří kritici, jako například Rendel Helms, vidí alegorie a symboly

spojující tyto dvě oblasti. Sauron bývá přirovnáván k Satanovi, objevují se také názory o spodobnění vyhnání z ráje v Tolkienově díle a další prvky obhajující nepopíratelné náboženské poselství zejména v *Pánu Prstenů*. Diskutována je také otázka, zda jsou zlé bytosti skutečně zlé a nejsou-li jen nástroji v rukách svého pána. I přes některé společné prvky s křesťanstvím, vykazuje Tolkienovo dílo o Středozemi mnohem více aspektů směřujících spíše k mytologii germánské, popřípadě řecko-římské. Popsány jsou společné jevy v germánské a Tolkienově kosmologii doplněny kontrastem postav, především bohů z těchto dvou zdrojů. Vyzvednut je také názor, že křesťanské myšlenky jsou blízké západnímu světu všeobecně a objevují se ve většině děl bez zamýšleného vztahu k náboženství či skrytých významů.

Dalším často představovaným názorem je Tolkienovo ovlivnění dvěma světovými válkami. Díky Tolkienově dobrovolné účasti v první světové válce například Janet Croft vidí ve Frodovi Pytlíkovi poválečný posttraumatický syndrom a Jessica Yates, i když odmítá srovnání Sauron s Hitlerem či skřety s Němci, připouští několik podobností, ve kterých vidí záměrné alegorie. Tyto teorie jsou zavrženy jak samotným Tolkiem, který ve své předmluvě k *Pánu Prstenů* odmítá spojitost svého díla s druhou světovou válkou, tak i kritikem Brianem Roseburym, který předestírá, že být ovlivněn něčím je něco jiného než tuto věc reprezentovat. V posledním oddíle první části práce jsou uvedeny další názory hledající skrytý význam v Tolkienově díle, jako například přesvědčení o autorově skryté kritice industrializace či vnímání rozdělení světa na vyspělý západ a zaostalý východ. I tyto argumenty jsou na základě podpůrných kritik vyvráceny.

Druhá část práce začíná stanovením několika pravděpodobných zdrojů Tolkienovy literatury pocházejících z mytologie různých národů. Jedná se především o starogermánské příběhy z poetické a pozdější prozaické *Eddy*, anglosaský epos o *Beowulf*, finský epos *Kalevala*, různá zpracování ságy o Nibelunzích a několik příběhů z keltského prostředí. Tyto zdroje jsou postupně obhajovány na základě důkazů srovnávání jednotlivých aspektů a svědectví samotného autora. Kromě mytologie byla pro Tolkiena inspirací i kniha Edmunda Spensera *Královna vil* a další novodobější pohádkové příběhy.

Jako první se práce zabývá vymezením záporných postav, za které jsou brány především monstra shromážděná okolo temného vládce Melkora a později Saurona. Zmíněny jsou i postavy na hranici dobra a zla, ale těmi se práce dále nezabývá. Předobrazy dvou vládců zla jsou viděny ve starogermánských bozích Lokim a Odinovi. Jelikož germánští bohové byli velmi rozporuplné osobnosti, lze v jejich temnějších stránkách nalézt společné prvky s Melkorem a Sauronem. Jde jak o jejich schopnost měnit podoby, přelstít a obelhat protivníka či jejich věčné spory s bohy. Sauronova fyzická podoba je srovnávána s Odinem díky tomu, že podle germánských mýtů měl i tento Bůh pouze jedno oko. Zmíněna je také jejich spojitost s určitými druhy zvířat, například vlky či vránami.

Nejrozsáhleji rozebranou skupinou záporných postav jsou skřeti. Jejich role v literatuře je komplikovaná, jelikož se vnímání těchto postav postupem času velmi změnilo. V nejstarších dochovaných zdrojích se slovo 'goblin' používá pro všechny pohádkové bytosti všeobecně. Dále byli takzvaní 'goblins' vnímáni jako malí chlupatí skřítki či šotci a v této podobě je lze nalézt i v raném díle profesora Tolkiena, například v *Dopisech Děda Mráze*. V *Hobitovi* či *Pánu Prstenů* se postavy skřetů začaly rýsovat v méně zdrobnělých a více negativních proporcích a ve snaze odlišit původní takřka neškodné postavy od krutých lidožravých skřetů vymyslel Tolkien pro své postavy název 'Orc'. Tato podkapitola se dále zabývá etymologií slov 'goblin' a 'Orc' a uvádí další výskyt těchto postav v jiných dílech. Ve srovnání Tolkienových skřetů s konkrétními předobrazy mytologie je zmíněno monstrum Grendel z *Beowulfa* a následuje podrobné srovnání různých aspektů. Nadnesena je také otázka výskytu ženských postav v Tolkienově tvorbě. Jako další zdroj pro postavy skřetů je uvedena *Sága o Nibelunzích*, i když je poukázáno na komplikovanost tohoto zdroje díky jeho častému přepracování.

V části o obrech je nejprve diskutován vývoj slova 'troll' s uvedením několika rozdílných významů v literatuře různých období. Jako hlavní mytologické zdroje jsou uvedeny *Edda*, kde obři stáli u počátku světa již při jeho stvoření, *Kalevala*, kde jsou obři vnímáni jako moudré bytosti, a několik dalších mytologických děl, zmiňujících se o těchto postavách. Vyzvednuty jsou společné vlastnosti Tolkienových obrů a obrů mytologických, především jejich proměna v kámen při styku s denním světlem a

fyzické a charakterové rysy. Opět je zmíněn i vývoj těchto postav v průřezu Tolkienova díla.

Další skupinou postav jsou takzvaní nemrtví, mezi které se řadí především Prstenové Přízraky, Mrtví z Šeré Brázdy, Mohyloví duchové a Mrtví z Mrtvých močálů. Srovnávání jsou s postavami nemrtvých z *Eddy*, *Kalevaly* a keltských legend. Ačkoli přímá inspirace postavami z mytologie není v tomto případě prokazatelná, některé Tolkienovy postavy vykazují společné prvky a mohly být tudíž mytologickými příběhy ovlivněny.

Ohniví démoni Balrogové jsou další skupinou, pocházející především z fantazie J.R.R. Tolkiena, nicméně v mytologických zdrojích lze nalézt několik postav sdílejících podobné znaky s těmito monstry. Eddický ohnivý obr Surt se svým hořícím mečem či již zmiňovaný Grendel z *Beowulfa* připomínají Balrogy buď svým vzezřením nebo povahovými rysy.

Draci, ač postavy velmi časté v mytologických zdrojích se v Tolkienově díle nevyskytují v hlavních rolích a v *Silmarillionu* a *Hobitovi* lze nalézt pouze dva významné draky. Další drak se vyskytuje v pohádce *Farmář Giles z Hamu*. V kapitole jsou srovnávání s drakem Fáfnirem z příběhu o Sigurdovi, s eddickými plazy či s draky z *Kalevaly*. Zmíněny jsou i rytířské příběhy a keltské zdroje, kde se postava draka také vyskytovala. Shrnuty jsou společné rysy Tolkienových a mytologických draků, ať už jde o jejich mazanost, touhu po bohatství nebo jejich jedinou slabinu, na kterou ve většině příběhů doplatí – měkkou oblast na břiše.

V části o zvířatech je detailněji rozebrán koncept vlků a vlkodlaků ve srovnání především s vlky boha Odina. Ostatní zvířecí postavy nejeví nijak podstatné společné znaky s mytologií a jedná se hlavně o inspiraci všeobecnými představami či lokálními historkami. Do této kategorie byli zařazeni netopýři a upíři, pavouci a příšera z hlubin před branou do Morie.

V poslední části věnované mytologickým zdrojům jsou zmíněny ostatní jevy v Tolkienově díle připomínající starogermánskou literaturu a epos *Beowulf*. Jedná se o použití veršů, lingvistické záležitosti a podobnost některých popisů jednotlivých míst.

J.R.R. Tolkien si zaslouží uznání především za to, že uvedl některé téměř zapomenuté postavy zpět do povědomí čtenářů a mytologickou látku upravil současným

představám. V jeho díle se spojuje kouzlo dávných příběhů s jeho vlastní představivostí a zároveň vědeckým přístupem k tématu.

Pozn.: Názvy děl J.R.R. Tolkiena jsou přeloženy tak, jak díla vyšla v České republice.

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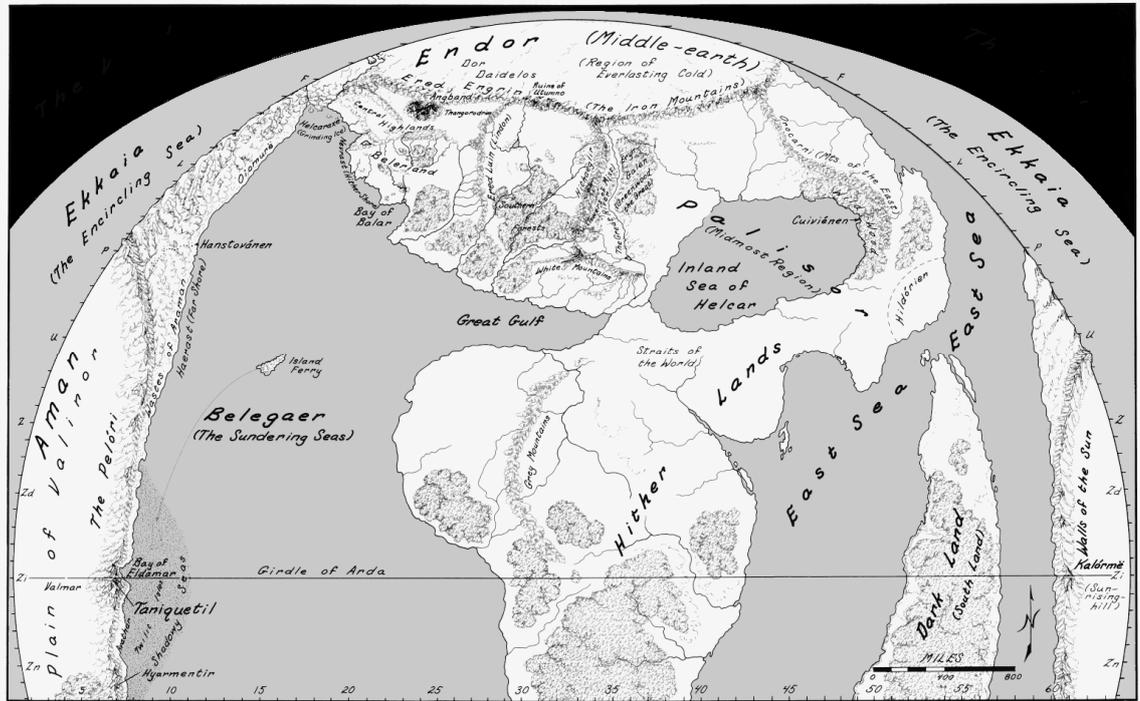
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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Note on Spelling and Names

The non-English words in the text usually respect the source of the information containing those. The terms and names from the primary sources follow the rules of *The LR* and *The Silmarillion* where the names of various races are capitalized, thus the spelling of Elves or Orcs appears with capitals in the beginning. The word goblin act mostly in older work of the author where the first letter is small and so it is in the text of the thesis. The word Middle-earth is also rewritten in the original form from *The LR*. The matter of dwarves is a bit complicated and the tendency is to use the capital while talking about the Dwarves from *The LR* and *The Silmarillion* and 'dwarves' for earlier or secondary sources. The unusual plural comes from Tolkien's preferences in his work. The double names for particular characters that appear in primary sources in two languages (mostly Common Speech and Elvish or Black Speech of Mordor) are tried to be explained and further in the text, there is a preference to use only one variety not to confuse the reader. In case of Nazgûls, this term is used only as taken from particular source and further, the term Ringwraiths is preferred. Morgoth is sometimes called by his original name Melkor but only in the situations when he was still one of the Ainur and before he turned into the evil lord. Some errors in this system are, however, possible since during quotations from primary sources differences also appear.

Appendix 2a: The Map of Tolkien's Arda.



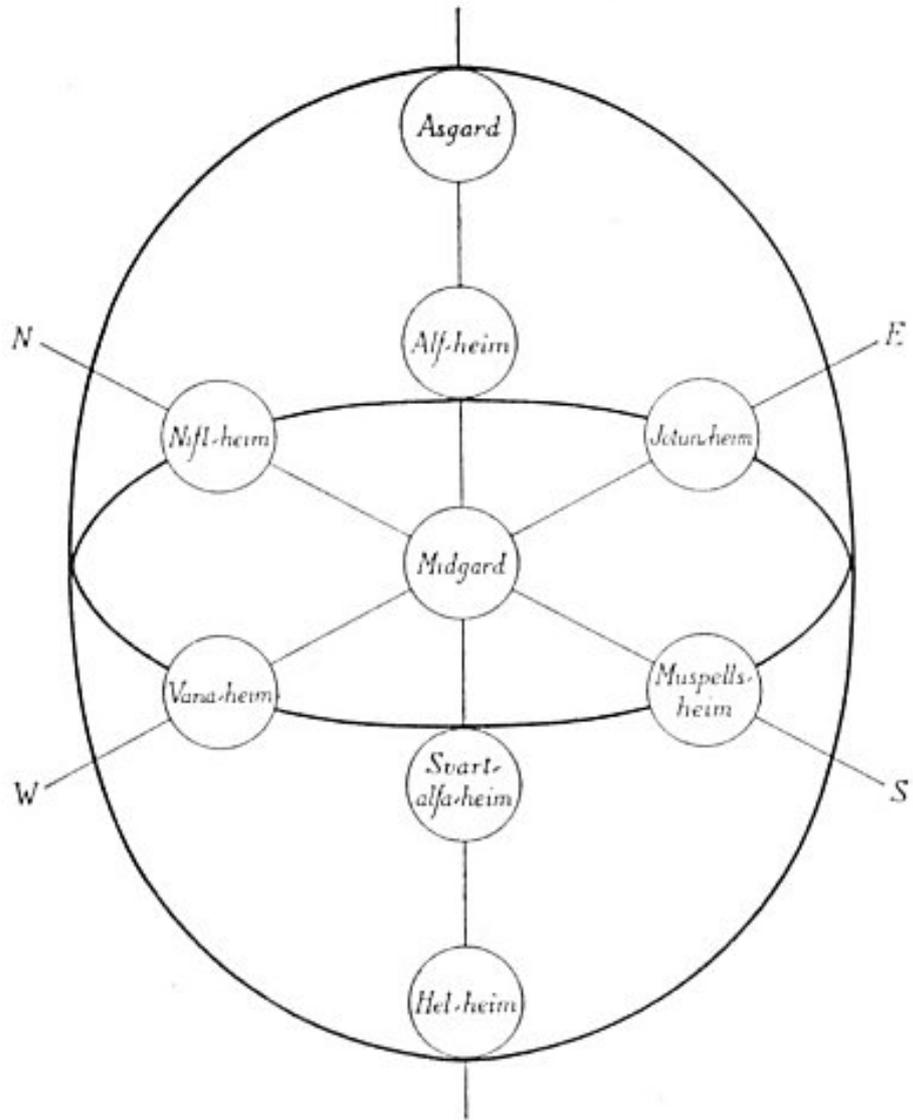
Source: <http://fantasymaps.wordpress.com/2008/05/17/tolkien-arda/>

Appendix 2b: The Map of Tolkien's Arda – detail of the Middle-earth and its position to the land of those who do not die



Source: Day, David. *Tolkienův bestiář*. Stanislava Pošustová. 1. vyd. Plzeň : Mustang, 1995. 302 s. ISBN 80-7191-015-5.

Appendix 3: The Scheme of Nine Norse Worlds



Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yggdrasil>