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The Heroes of J.R.R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, their Development and Transformation

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Poděkování

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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vývojem a transformací hrdinů v díle *Pán Prstenů* J.R.R. Tolkiena. Práce nejprve nastiňuje život J.R.R. Tolkiena a inspiraci, která ho vedla k vytvoření jeho děl – epos, román, klasické a moderní pohádky. Také se zabývá typickými postavami těchto literárních žánrů a pojetím dobra a zla v díle Tolkiena. Praktická část představuje nejprve rasy, do kterých se vybrané postavy řadí a jejich stručnou historii. Zkoumanými postavami z daných ras jsou Aragorn, Frodo, Gimli, Legolas, Gandalf a Saruman. Na základě vybraných situací ze všech knih trilogie práce zkoumá hrdinské vlastnosti a morální vývoj těchto postav.

Key Words: J.R.R. Tolkien, *Pán prstenů*, postava hrdiny, Aragorn, Frodo, Gimli, Legolas, Gandalf a Saruman.

Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the development and transformation of heroes in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. At the beginning the thesis describes the life of J.R.R. Tolkien and his inspiration: the epic, novel, classical and modern fairy tales, which contributed to the creation of Tolkien's fantasy stories. The thesis focuses on the typical characters of these genres and on the concept of good and evil. The practical part introduces the races of selected heroes and their brief history. The analysis observes the following characters: Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, Frodo, Gandalf, and Saruman. As all three books show, all characters have heroic moments that reflect their moral growth and explain why the characters are considered heroes.

Key words: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, heroic figures, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, Frodo, Gandalf, Saruman

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Introduction

When the genre of fantasy is mentioned, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien and his *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* come to everyone's mind almost immediately. These works belong to the best examples of fantasy adventure in the history of the genre and almost everyone comes across it during their life, either in book or filmed version. Tolkien's heroes and villains are often compared either in power or overall complexity with characters from other stories of fantasy fiction such as *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars* or *Game of Thrones*.

My bachelor thesis focuses on the question what does it mean to be a hero, and on the heroes' development throughout their journey. In the theoretical part I describe the life of J.R.R Tolkien and how he came to invent his own fantasy world with its own mythologies and legends. After that I briefly describe the epic, novel and classical and modern fairy tales, from which Tolkien took inspiration for his heroes and villains. Before diving into the practical part, I describe the idea of a hero and how heroic qualities are viewed.

In the practical part I briefly describe several Tolkien's races and the outline of their history. For each race I have selected one hero apart for wizards, where I describe both Gandalf and Saruman, his evil character and why did he become a villain. For each hero I choose several heroic moments from all three books. I describe each particular circumstance showing why these figures can be considered heroic and how the hero develops and evolves during various kinds of adventure. Not all heroes go through the same kind of development.

The main sources are the trilogy of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, and I also use theoretical literature for describing the epic, novel, classical and modern fairy tales, for example, the studies of H. Carpenter and M. Bakhtin.

1. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien

1.1 The life of J.R.R. Tolkien

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein (today's Republic of South Africa) in 1892. His parents, Mabel (born Suffield), and Arthur lived there because Arthur was a bank branch director there. Arthur was used to the circumstances unlike Mabel, she was never happy there, therefore, she decided to return with Ronald and his younger brother Hillary back to England in 1895. This was the last time Arthur could see his family, he died in 1896.

The Tolkien family were from East Prussia, and they always liked to talk about their origin and tell colourful and romantic stories. It was Ronald's aunt who always told these stories to him. Ronald was 4 years old when Mabel moved them all to English countryside, which had a lasting effect on Ronald. He himself wrote: *"Four years, but the longest-seeming and most formative part of my life."*¹ Ronald knew how to read and write since this age, his linguistic talent was obvious since he was little. During these young years Ronald took liking in Latin and English. Mabel homeschooled her kids and besides that she gave them fairy-tale books. *"Alice in Wonderland amused him [...]. He did not like Treasure Island same as tales by Andersen, not even Pied Piper of Hamelin."*² On the other hand, he very much liked westerns, books by George McDonald and Arthurian legends. Ronald was the most excited about *The Red Fairy Book* by Andrew Lang, where there is a story about Sigurd, who killed the dragon Fafnir. As Carpenter writes in his study: *"it was the best tale he ever read"*.³

Religion also had an important influence on Tolkien. In 1900 his mother decided to convert to Catholicism, most of the family was angry at her for this. Ronald himself despised the Church of England and said that it was *"a pitiful and vague mishmash of half-forgotten traditions and truncated beliefs."*⁴ They had to move from the picturesque English countryside. Religion filled the emptiness in him after his mother died in 1904. A priest and a family friend, Francis Morgan, became his guardian.

¹ CARPENTER, Humphrey. J.R.R. Tolkien: životopis, Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1993, p. 30. ISBN 8020404090.

² Ibid, p. 28.

³ Ibid, p. 28.

⁴ Ibid, p. 64.

His interest in linguistics grew during his attendance to King Edward's School. The most interesting to him was Anglo-Saxon English, in this language he read *Beowulf*. Besides that, he discovered the book *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and his imagination started to expand. During his reading Ronald began to invent his own languages. One of the first was Naffar, Spanish language was the main influential element for this made-up language. Thanks to his intellect he tried to get scholarship at the University of Oxford, he succeeded in his second attempt. Apart from his interest in linguistics he also expanded his fondness of painting, drawing and calligraphy. During his studies at Oxford, Ronald started to investigate the Finnish language, which he later used for Quenya language, also known as the High Elvish. As the language expanded Tolkien felt that the language needs history: "*You can't have a language without people speaking it.*"⁵ In the summer of 1914, he wrote a poem "The Voyage of Éarendel the Evening Star." Eventually this poem became the beginning of his own mythology and history for Quenya.

When Ronald was 16 years old, he fell in love with a 3-year older Edith Bratt, however, his guardian disapproved of their love and forbade him from going out with her until he was 21. Their affection prevailed and before Ronald went away fighting in The Great War, he had married her, and they stayed together until Edith's death in 1971. Together they had three sons, John Francis, Michael Hilary, Christopher John, and one daughter Priscilla Anne.

When the war started, Ronald was 22 years old. He joined the fights on the western front where he endured violent battles such as the Battle of the Sömmе. After some time, he suffered from the "trench fever", he was taken to England and never returned. During the time of war, Tolkien's regiment, The Lancashire Fusiliers, won more Victoria Crosses than any other regiment during the First World War.⁶ He wrote about one of his characters once: "*My Sam Gamgee is indeed a reflection of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war and recognized as so far superior to myself.*"⁷

Ronald had a great fondness in Norse mythology and minded that England had no such stories. His main motives for creating his own mythology were, therefore, having a history for

⁵ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 73.

⁶ SHIPPEY, Thomas Alan. *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the century*. London: Harper Collins, 2000, p. 59. ISBN 9780007381951.

⁷ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 78.

his language and having a mythology for England.⁸ Thanks to this desire he started *The Silmarillion*; the first story he wrote in 1917 was the *Fall of Gondolin*. Tolkien believed that there used to be Eden and that primal sin was to blame for the world's ills. From the religious perspective, His Elves did not sin, henceforth, they are immortal, and Men are below them.⁹ Another poem added to his mythology is *The Children of Húrin*. An inspiration for these verses was his wife, one time she sang and danced for him in a forest becoming a template for the story of Beren and Lúthien.¹⁰ These names are also written on the tombstones of Ronald and Edith.

When the war ended, Tolkien went and worked at the University of Oxford. After some time, he left for the Leeds University, eventually he returned into Oxford, where he then stayed. After his return, C.S Lewis became one of his closest friends, with Tolkien's arguments Lewis converted to Catholicism.

The book that started to make him famous was *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*, published in 1937. The main hero of the book is Bilbo Baggins, and he shares some qualities with Ronald, for example, clothing.¹¹ Bilbo's home is greatly inspired by the Worchester Estate, from where the Suffield family come from. *The Hobbit* was written smoothly almost without rewrites, only some names were different. After the book was published, a demand on sequel was placed so Ronald offered his already written books, but they were declined. So came the story of Bilbo's cousin, Frodo, in *The Lord of the Rings*. After some time, however, *The Lord of the Rings* became a sequel rather to *The Silmarillion*, than to *The Hobbit*. Tolkien suggested to publish it as one book, but publishers refused this, therefore, it was divided into three volumes. A great success was not expected. The first two volumes were published in 1954, the third one a year later due to delays because of additions, maps, family trees, etc. In the USA the trilogy sold faster than *Lord of the Flies* or *The Catcher in the Rye*.¹² Apart from the mentioned works, Tolkien wrote many others: *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, *Smith of Wootton Major*. As for his theoretical works, for this thesis, the essay

⁸ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 85.

⁹ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 88.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 91.

¹¹ Ibid, p 157.

¹² Ibid, p. 203.

On Fairy-Stories is the most important, it is Tolkien's lecture about fairy-stories and fantasy-tales.

J.R.R Tolkien died in England in 1973. His youngest son Christopher John follows in his footsteps, he gives lectures on Old English at the University of Oxford, and he has also published many of Tolkien's works, for example, *The Silmarillion*.

1.2 The inspiration of J.R.R Tolkien

Tolkien took inspiration from many kinds of experience in his life: his home and family, his relationships, his religious faith, the books he read, the events he saw and lived through. This chapter shall sketch where his inspiration is reflected. As mentioned above, the languages he invented were inspired by already existing languages – Quenya is inspired by Finnish, Naffar is inspired by Spanish. Tolkien’s grandfather lived his last years on a farm with his daughter in Dormston, Worcester. As Carpenter writes about this farm, “*it was at the end of a path that led no further, and the locals used to call him, Bag End.*”¹³ Even looks of some characters are rooted in random moments of inspiration. Gandalf’s appearance is inspired by Josef Mandlener’s painting “Der Bergegeist,” which Tolkien bought as a postcard.¹⁴ A distinct inspiration for Tolkien’s work was literature and the books he read, one of the oldest ones was *Edda*. It is an ancient book on the Norse mythology, which was written in Iceland in the half of the 13th century. Reading *Edda*, the reader can find many names which appear in Tolkien’s works (Dúrin, Dwalin, Bifur, Böfur, Fili, Kíli, Glóin, Mirkwood...).¹⁵ The Norse mythology is an important source not only for names but also other elements. One of the stories of *Edda* is the “*ballad about Siegfried, the dragonslayer who seized the fabled treasure of the Nibelungs.*”¹⁶

This story was later retold and changed. It can be found in *Beowulf* or in *The Song of the Nibelungs*. Tolkien knew all versions, so he took what he needed from each of them. The first version tells a story about Sigurd, who kills Dragon called Fáfnir and seizes a treasure of an evil Dwarf. An inspiration for *The Hobbit* can be seen in this story. A cursed ring is a part of this treasure, and it brings doom upon Sigurd. The name of the hero is changed through times. In the final version by Richard Wagner, many identical motifs emerge with Tolkien’s work: dragon guarding the treasure, the dragon’s weak point on his chest, the magical ring that gives power, the talisman bestowing invisibility, the reforging of a broken sword, the Ring bringing death and a moral downfall of its bearer.¹⁷

¹³ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 100.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 52.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 135-136.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 138.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 143.

The Lord of the Rings can be categorised as a heroic fantasy novel or a fantastic epic. The works that preceded this genre are epics and medieval chivalrous novels. Since the ancient epics, the themes of travel and battles have been present but never put into a single work. An example is *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* by Homer about the Trojan War and the return of one of the soldiers. The ancient epics contained gods, demigods, ghosts of the dead, dragons, hydras, hippogryphs, sphinx, basilisks, and many other beings. Apart from Homer's epics, other tales arose such as the epic *Kyklos*. Tolkien's works share a common concept of the fantasy world: "a vast landscape of fantastic wars and imaginary places, populated by fantastic monsters and strange people, ruled by deities with superhuman powers."¹⁸ Overall, stories happening in the fantasy world began to become more frequent.

Vergilius followed up on Homer with his work *Aeneid*, also happening during the Trojan War. Other European states also had their ancient heroic literature. Anglo-Saxon work of this kind is *Beowulf*, which is considered as "a first instance of British literature."¹⁹ The enchanted swords with their name (Hrunting for Beowulf), dragons and other motifs appear in this work which also appear in the works written by Tolkien. There is also a resemblance in the names of the prominent heroes (Beowulf/Aragorn).

The genre that built on the epic and adventurous narratives is medieval novel. The theme of the journey as well as warfare, the supernatural and the great heroes can be found there as well as in the epic. The characters that appear in the medieval novel are wizards using magic. Magic substitutes the acts of a god or gods, who appeared in older literature.²⁰ William Morris, who founded heroic fantasy novel, follows up on the epics.²¹ His novels were placed in an imaginary world with magic and supernatural phenomena.

Apart from the genres mentioned above, Tolkien took inspiration in the fairy-stories he read as a little boy. One of the main characteristics of a fairy-story is the fact that it is set in a fantasy world. Because of this *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* can be categorized as

¹⁸ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 97.

¹⁹ CARTER, Lin. Tolkien: Zákulisí Pána prstenů. Přeložil Stanislava POŠUSTOVÁ-MENŠÍKOVÁ. Praha: Argo, 2002. p. 103. ISBN 807203457X.

²⁰ Cf. CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 109-110.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 121.

fairy-stories. Tolkien suggests that all the supernatural, miraculous and fantasy elements are supposed to be true. Everything needs to be presented as true. This is one of the reasons why he disrespects Carrolls's *Alice in Wonderland*, in which "it was all a dream".²² Furthermore, Tolkien disagrees with statements saying that fairy-stories are meant especially for children, which is understandable with the complexity of *The Lord of the Rings*.²³ If an author wishes to be a good narrator for a fairy-story, he needs to create his own world. Tolkien's understanding of fairy-stories, which he shared in his lecture, was later published as *On Fairy-Stories*.

²² TOLKIEN, John Ronald Ruel. *On Fairy-Stories*. Dublin: Harper Collins, 2014. p. 60. ISBN 9780007582914.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 49-50.

1.2.1 Characters of the epic and classical fairy tale

As I have already mentioned, J.R.R. Tolkien took a great inspiration from the epic and novel figures. According to Bakhtin²⁴, a significant feature of the hero of an epic is the fact that he stays the same, he does not change. He is all exterior and could only become what he has already become.²⁵ His own opinion of himself is the same as the society he lives with views him.²⁶ The story is built on this fact, and it collapses when the hero starts to seek something new or different about himself.²⁷ As for the language side, the epic beings know only one language, which is spoken everywhere. Therefore, languages cannot be used for the individualization of particular persons or groups. This rule applies even to the divine deities, they speak the same language and have the same worldview.

These rules can be seen in Homer's *Odyssey*. Ulysses is the main hero of the story and since the beginning, the reader knows exactly who the hero is. He is smart, strong, resourceful, etc. All these attributes are shown through the story: for example, when Ulysses and his crew come across sirens, he pours wax into his companions' ears, so they are not seduced. For his strength he holds himself upwards by the fur of a sheep, to outsmart the Cyclopes.

In his essay *On Fairy-stories*, Tolkien focuses on many things, including characters. In the magical world of fairy-stories, the narrators offer a way to explore profound truths through simple and clear characters, who often represent fundamental human virtues and vices.²⁸ It means that fairy-tale characters have attributes generally known among cultures. Simply put, the hero is brave, strong, intelligent and selfless. On the other hand, Baba Yaga as an antagonist is evil, cruel, vile and treacherous. Characters are therefore "black and white". These figures are known as archetypes. In general, evil in classical fair-tale characters is connected with traits of jealousy, greed, pride and the desire for power, which shall be

²⁴ BAKHTIN, Mikhail Mikhailovich. *Román jako dialog*. Transl. Daniela HODROVÁ. ARS. Praha: Odeon, 1980, p. 35.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 34.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 34.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 34.

²⁸ TOLKIEN, J.R.R., *On Fairy-Stories*, p. 59-66.

punished. While the humble, the selfless, the hardworking, the honest, and the noble are rewarded.²⁹

In the world of *The Lord of the Rings*, a typical epic figure is Sauron. Since the first mention the reader knows that he is evil and that he has a great influence and power. As the story unfolds, these properties can be seen through the motif of the One Ring: Sauron puts a great portion of his power and will into it. It is said by Elrond that nothing was evil in the beginning, nevertheless, Sauron is the main antagonist of Tolkien's trilogy.

²⁹ CARPENTER, H., J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 86.

1.2.1.1 Characters of the modern fairy tales

Characters in modern fairy tales are more complicated than in the classical stories. The hero is not invulnerable anymore but struggles and can be injured, evil beings have their backstory or explanations for their evil deeds. Eventually all characters evolve in a certain way, and they overcome some difficulties either psychological or physical. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* contains many examples of this. Boromir is introduced as a hero trying to protect his people and he succumbs to the One Ring but dies protecting Merry and Pippin. Pippin is a young and unexperienced Hobbit who becomes one of the guardians of Citadel.³⁰ Gollum is an evil character who is given an original story about his misery so the reader can even pity him. I will write about other characters and their development in the practical part. All things considering the figures in modern fairy tales are more complex and complicated than in the classical fairy tales.

Another instance of the development of a negative protagonist in modern fairy tales is *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde. The giant is introduced as an evil and selfish character that does not want little kids to play in his garden. However, winter falls on the garden and he becomes sad. After some time, the kids manage to sneak in and parts of the garden begin to melt, the giant is happy for his garden and lets the kids play there.

³⁰ TOLKIEN, John Ronald Ruel. *Pán prstenů: Návrat krále*. Vyd. 6., V Argu 3. Transl. Stanislava POŠUSTOVÁ-MENŠÍKOVÁ. Praha: Argo, 2012, p. 22-23. ISBN 9788025707487.

1.3 The concept of good and evil in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien

The Lord of the Rings develops a classical conflict between good and evil, however, in Tolkien's world there is nothing purely evil. He himself writes in one of his letters that even the vilest being has powers in himself that are not evil.³¹ Elrond himself says: "*For nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so.*"³²

Tolkien's concept of evil is connected with the idea that good is necessary in the world, it exists primarily and independently, however, evil parasites on the world.³³ This concept of evil is called privative and comes from the opinion that evil is an absence of good. The One Ring was made to influence its bearer, to control others. It does not have that much of an effect, because its power is conditioned by the particular character holding it. It was in Bilbo's possession for 60 years and his moral downfall and corruption was minimal. On the other hand, Sméagol had it for a while and almost immediately murdered his cousin Déagol. Nevertheless, even a good Hobbit like Frodo is not immune. During the final moment he is not capable of letting go of the ring and says that it belongs to him. It is Gollum's lust that destroys the One Ring. Aragorn knows of the One Ring's power but hopes for Sauron's fall without it, whereas Boromir desires the One Ring as he does not believe in his influence on morality.³⁴

The concept of evil can be seen best on Sauron, who acts on his desire to control and rule others. He wants to become the most powerful, therefore, he becomes the most evil and vile.³⁵ A way to describe whether a person is good or bad is to judge their actions and their character traits.³⁶ The ethical code, which is brought up by Aristoteles, can help us understand. According to it, the basic component of moral wisdom is "reason." Bravery does not always mean the same thing. It is important to assess the whole situation and the particular behaviour which led to the situation. For example, when Frodo stands against Shelob, he becomes overconfident and is bitten by her.

³¹ BASSHAM, Gregory – BRONSON, Eric. ed. *Pán prstenů a filozofie*. Praha: XYZ, 2009, p. 162. ISBN 9788073881498.

³² TOLKIEN, John Ronald Ruel. *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo prstenu*. Vyd. 6., V Argu 3. Přeložil Stanislava POŠUSTOVÁ-MENŠÍKOVÁ. Praha: Argo, 2012. p. 283. ISBN 9788025707470.

³³ BASSHAM, G. – BRONSON, E., *Pán prstenů*, p. 163.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 183.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 171.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 175.

2. Heroism

In my thesis I will write about the development and signs of heroism of selected characters throughout their journey. This chapter tries to explain what it means to be a hero and which stereotypes appear when the word “hero” is mentioned. It can be said that all heroes must overcome a certain type of obstacles in their path to fulfil their task.

The heroes in the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* come in all shapes and sizes, there is the powerful wizard or the little and gentle Hobbits. Heroes in the prototypical word are described in the study written by Joseph Campbell *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The mythological hero leaves his mundane dwelling or a castle, is tempted, kidnapped, or voluntarily comes to a line beyond which lies an adventure. After crossing the line, the hero enters unknown but somewhat familiar forces. Some of them may be fatally challenging (trials), others can offer magical help (helpers). Arriving at the deepest point of the mythological circle, the hero is faced with the hardest trial of all after which he earns his prize.³⁷ This applies to many heroes of *The Lord of the Rings* - Hobbits must leave their comfortable Shire, Legolas must leave Mirkwood and Gimli his homeland. Typical “helper” in Tolkien’s story is Gandalf or Lady Galadriel: from her many Fellowship members receive a gift of some kind which can help them on their journey. The usage of these gifts may be crucial sometimes.

Tolkien’s work *The Lord of the Rings* is not meant to be a typical fairy-story but sometimes is interpreted as such, some people even say that it contains a religious allegory.³⁸ It can be said that our life, national folklore, religion, and literature has a direct influence on what we imagine behind the term “hero.” Many times, the heroic traits are similar: strength, bravery, loyalty, strong will, selflessness, luck, and strong moral compass. Such traits can be found within the Fellowship, nevertheless, every member goes through a kind of transformation during their journey and, in the end, everyone achieves their goal.

³⁷ Cf. CAMPBELL, Joseph. *Tisíc tváří hrdiny: archetyp hrdiny v proměnách věků*. Praha: Portál, 2000, p. 221-222. ISBN 8071783544.

³⁸ Cf. BASSHAM, G. – BRONSON, E., ed. *Pán prstenů a filozofie*, p. 307-308.

3. Races in the work of J.R.R. Tolkien

3.1 The Elves

When Eru Illúvatar, the highest deity, created Arda, its first inhabitants were the Elves, who were made according to the image of Valar. They are also called The Children of Illúvatar, with the privilege that the Elves are immortal and have lived in Arda since the First Age. One of the oldest Elves in *The Lord of the Rings* is Lady Galadriel, who is said to be the most beautiful of all descendants of the house of Finwë.³⁹

It can be said that among all races, Elves are the most spiritual, for example, they can hear stones cry and rivers sing. They are in a perfect harmony with nature and this harmony is reflected in their extraordinary perception of music. The ability of suggestive singing and playing musical instruments is a characteristic feature of all the Elves. Arda was created by singing of Eru Illúvatar's children.

The Elves as the "Firstborn" are closer to Ainur⁴⁰ than any other race, so they search inspiration especially in Ainur's sense of harmony and the unity with nature. The reader meets Elves during the end of the Third Age. Unfortunately, the Elves are supposed to leave the Middle-earth after the Third Age⁴¹. Reason for their departure is that the Men are supposed to lead the Middle-earth after the Elves.

The Elves represent heroism which turns them into devoted and passionate followers of the divine order and high moral principles. The fact that Elves are called "Firstborn" increases the sense of responsibility in them, and they love Arda with their whole heart. *"Whereas the Elves remain until the end of days, and their love of the Earth and all the world is more single and more poignant therefore, and as the years lengthen ever more sorrowful."*⁴²

This is the reason why they want to defend Arda against all kinds of threats and evil-minded creatures. In accordance with the traditional image of heroes, the Elves are not afraid

³⁹ Cf. TOLKIEN, John Ronald Ruel. *Silmarillion*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 1992. p. 49. ISBN 8020403361.

⁴⁰ Ainur were children of Ilúvatar, the highest entity in the world of J.R.R Tolkien

⁴¹ Cf. STANTON, Michael N. *Hobiti, elfové a čarodějové: objevování divů ve světě Tolkienova Pána prstenů*. Přeložil Stanislava POŠUSTOVÁ-MENŠÍKOVÁ. Praha: Mladá fronta, 2003. Svět J.R.R. Tolkiena. p. 125. ISBN 8020410325.

⁴² TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Silmarillion*, p. 29.

to give up their immortal lives for the others since life for them means something completely different than to others. If their noble quest failed, everything and everyone they hold dear would end in destruction and death. This kind of pressure is not too difficult to handle for the Elves because of their spirituality, as well as their unbroken will and undying hope.

3.1.1 Legolas

3.1.1.1 *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The Fellowship finds itself in a dire situation on the cruel Caradhras. Its snow is tall, heavy, and very hard to go through. Legolas takes advantage of his light and easy steps to scout ahead for his companions. The brave Elf has no way of knowing what lies in the darkness in front of him. He is an Elf and to him life means something different than to the others. That doesn't mean him risking his life is any less heroic.

After being defeated by Caradhras, The Fellowship swerves their route to the mines of Moria. Through those mines the company is led by Gandalf and Legolas just keeps to himself but towards the end there is an attack of goblins. Fighting their way out, Legolas tries to cover everyone with his bow and arrow. Gandalf gives his life to save his friends, Legolas is keen on Aragorn's idea of going to Lothlórien, one of the lands still inhabited by the Elves.

The Elves of Lothlórien provide the Fellowship with shelter and food. Legolas spends most of his time with other Elves but takes Gimli along with him. Relationships between Elves and Dwarves were never sound, nevertheless, during their stay in Lothlórien Legolas and Gimli become more than acquaintances, they become friends. For Legolas this is an important step towards building an important bond between their two kinds. Overcoming this kind of hostility and remaking it into friendship is a remarkable showcase of selflessness and willpower.

3.1.1.2 *The Two Towers*

The Fellowship is gone and Merry and Pippin were abducted by Orcs. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli cannot leave them to a fate worse than death. They set out after them for not knowing how long they shall run. Gimli and Legolas started to overcome their differences and Aragorn is a great leader and fighter, who else is better than them to run after the Orcs. This part I chose because it shows how loyal Legolas is to his friends and companions.

Another instance of Legolas's growth is the battle of Helm's Deep. The Elven prince helps to defend the people of Rohan and to fight the army of Saruman. He fiercely fights and shows his skill with the bow and arrow and the daggers for the Elven warriors are unmatched with said weapons. Gimli's relationship with Legolas evolves since they finally get to fight side by side after building their friendship. Together they count how many enemies they brought down with their weapons. It can be seen as cynical, nevertheless, they both do what they need to, they protect their friends and loved ones.

3.1.1.3 *The Return of the King*

The realm of Men is in a dire need of an army, so Aragorn decides to take the Path of the Dead. Aragorn wants his friends to come with him but only if they volunteer. Legolas does so for he “*does not fear the Dead*”.⁴³ Why would he turn back on his friend now in his time of need. Even when the company came to the Dark Door hearts of all were beating with fear apart from the Elf’s. Throughout the story the reader can notice that once Legolas joins the Fellowship, he has his comrades back and supports them and it really does not change.

One of the biggest developments that Legolas goes through is with Gimli. They both go from hating each other to visiting each other’s homelands. The final and the biggest prove of their bond is that Legolas invited Gimli to go with him to the Undying Lands. Gimli is therefore first and last Dwarf to cross the sea to the West. It is rumoured that Gimli went with Legolas to see the beauty of Lady Galadriel again and that it was Lady Galadriel who made his coming possible.⁴⁴ The transformation of Gimli and Legolas is heartwarming to see and every situation where they show the appreciation for each other is beautiful.

⁴³ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Návrat*, p. 50.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 381.

3.2 Dwarves

Dwarves were created by Aulë, one of the Ainur and great a craftsman, who wanted to, above all else, have students who he could teach his craft and skills. So, he made Dwarves and made them of stone, nevertheless, Eru was the only one to breathe life into anything. Aulë made Seven fathers of the dwarves but was ready to smite them with his hammer and he was sad. Eru, however, was kind and saw Aulë's remorse, so he promised that Dwarves shall live but not before the Firstborns. Aulë was grateful, took the Seven and laid them to rest each one at a different place. It was foretold that the Dwarves shall come to life during the days of Melkor's power, hence, Aulë made them strong and resilient, they lived for a long time, longer than Men, but not forever. Among the Elves it is said that after Dwarves die, they return to the stone and dirt from where they came.⁴⁵ When Sauron gave the Seven rings of power to the Dwarves, he found it difficult to corrupt them, since they cannot be turned into shadows and their mind cannot be seduced.

⁴⁵ Cf. TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Silmarillion*, p. 30-31.

3.2.1 Gimli

3.2.1.1 *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The Council of Elrond is a moment where the reader meets many heroes of the story of *The Lord of the Rings*. Gimli, the representative of the Dwarves, is one of those heroes. He is a great and fierce warrior but the task to destroy the One Ring was not going to be easy and none of them could know what lied ahead for them. One of the reasons he joined the company could be the bad relationship between the Dwarves and the Elves. However, the Dwarves are known for their stubbornness and unbreakable spirit so every could be certain that he is going to be nothing but loyal.

Since the departure from Rivendell Gimli is eager to go through the mines of Moria and see his cousin Balin, one of the Dwarves from the company of Thorin Oakenshield. Unfortunately, the Fellowship found all the Dwarves dead. There is a far greater evil than Goblins and Orcs, Balrog. The last time that Balrog was awoken, the Dwarves dug gold intensively and refused to stop. They kept digging and their doom was awoken, the Dwarves found their death in the things they wanted most. Gimli gave a good fight against the Goblin horde, nevertheless, against the thread of Balrog he could not do anything. It is for the first time that we see Gimli afraid of something, the danger of craving gold shall stick with the Dwarf forever.

Throughout the journey the reader can see Gimli as a strong, skilful and loyal warrior, but it is before Lady Galadriel where his softer and more humble side comes into light. During the "audience" with Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel Gimli shows his manners before the highborn. Celeborn accused Gimli of Gandalf's death but Lady Galadriel stood up for Gimli and talked to him about Dwarven monuments in the ancient tongue of the Dwarves.⁴⁶ During their departure Gimli asked Lady Galadriel for a single strand of hair as a reminder of their conversation and as a symbol of a good will between the Mountain and the Wood. A beautiful example of Gimli's selflessness and appreciation.

⁴⁶ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo*, p. 374.

3.2.1.2 *The Two Towers*

Aragorn, Legolas, Gandalf, and Gimli ride into Riddermark to get help to fight the Isengard. Gimli is mostly in the background but shows his “rebellious” and fighting spirit when Aragorn refuses to give up his sword Andúril. Háma, doorman of Théoden, draws his sword against Aragorn, none other but Gimli could be expected to support Aragorn. Gandalf swiftly defuses the situation, nevertheless, Gimli once again shows his devotion to his friends. Later after Gandalf talks to Wormtongue and reveals that they came from Lothlórien, Wormtongue greatly insults Lady Galadriel and Lothlórien. Not Legolas or Aragorn react to it, Gimli on the other hand takes a step forward, if not stopped by Gandalf, Gimli would make Wormtongue take his words back.

3.2.1.3 *The Return of the King*

Gimli is offered a choice to go with Aragorn on the Paths of the Dead. It comes as no surprise that he agrees to journey into these unknown lands with his partners. However, after coming to the Door of the Dead Gimli is the last to go in even after the men of Dúnadan and Legolas. Ego gets a better of Gimli and he goes in because who else but him should go into this dark dungeon. Out of all the members of the company, Gimli was the most frightened. After coming across remains of a man with a golden armour towards which he had no desire to go maybe because of the fate of the Dwarves from Moria, the Dwarf remembered only little. He always felt as if a terrible darkness was about to grab him until he crawled like an animal and thought to himself that he cannot endure much more.⁴⁷ Later Gimli and Legolas talked with Pippin, the Hobbit wants to know more about The Path of the Dead, however, Gimli does not want to say anything willingly for he was put to shame. *“For upon the road I was put to shame: Gimli Glóin’s son, who had deemed himself more tough than Men, and hardier under the earth than any Elf. But neither did I prove; and I was held to the road only by the will of Aragorn.”*⁴⁸

⁴⁷ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Návrat*, p. 56-57.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 151.

3.3 Men

Men are also known as the successors after the Elves. The Elves call them the “Secondborn”. In the words of Tolkien, Men as a race possess the “gift of men,” which means they can die because of old age, diseases, or fatal wounds. Knowledge of their unescapable fate of death means that sacrificing their life is even more tragic and heroic. Being aware of the danger of imminent death can lead either to heroism or to cowardice. There are many examples of Men who just want to survive and ensure that their life will not be taken away from them.

The Elves consider the Men a burden to Manwë as their desire for power is the strongest among the races.⁴⁹ This weakness is exploited by Sauron when he persuades Celebrimbor to forge nine rings of power for the kings of Men. After their complete fall to the influence of the One ring, the kings of Men became Nazgûl, the servants of the Dark Lord. *“Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnare them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became Ringwraiths, shadows under his great Shadows, his most terrible servants”*⁵⁰. This is how Gandalf describes them to Frodo. Men are one of the most fragile inhabitants of Arda in contrast to Elves or Dwarves, they do not live long or possess any kind of special skill. On the other hand, The Nine or Nazgûl are considered as one of the biggest threats in the Middle-earth. The reader may find this ironic.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the reader encounters many Men, only Aragorn is the one of the descendants of Númenor. Númenorians, also known as Dúnadains, are called “the kings amongst Men.” Their lives also end in death of an old age or fatal wound; however, they do not fall to illness. Dúnedains are descendants of Elros, brother of Elrond, who chose to become mortal and for this he was blessed with life much longer than life of an average man. For this relation with the Elves, Dúnedains resemble them most of all houses of Men.

⁴⁹ Cf. The Lord of the Rings Wiki. Men. [online]. Retrieved from: <https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Men?so=search>

⁵⁰ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo*, p. 61.

3.3.1 Aragorn

3.3.1.1 *The Fellowship of the Ring*

When the reader meets Aragorn for the first time, he is just a ranger, a descendant of a royal bloodline, but he does not want to be the king. He might not want the throne of Gondor, but his heroism is unquestionable. One of Aragorn's first heroic deeds are him fighting off the Ringwraiths at the Weathertop. In his company are four Hobbits, they are not defenceless, nevertheless, they are no match for the servants of the Dark Lord. Frodo tried to fight them off but got stabbed, Aragorn came just in time to save them. This is a typical heroic moment; Aragorn did not fear, nor he hesitated. In sight of immediate danger, the first instinct is to protect others and risk his own life.

The Fellowship comes face to face with one of the fiercest and frightening enemy, Balrog, none of the company except for Gandalf can stand against him. Strider wastes no time and makes a stand with Gandalf against the terrible creature. As a hero should, he is ready to give his life on the line for the ones he loves. This shows great bravery and devotion to others. On the other hand, him standing against the Balrog with Gandalf can be seen as a form of stubbornness, Aragorn is no match for him and if he should die, all of it would be for nothing. This part of the story is a great turning point for everyone.

After the encounter with Balrog, leader of the Fellowship, Gandalf, loses his life. Aragorn holds him in a very high regard and is struck with a great tragedy of losing a friend and the most powerful person he knows. The reader can see how much Aragorn cares for Gandalf but he must take his place and fill his shoes. This is no easy task he makes the best effort, though. For his selflessness he is well respected and tries to hold everyone together, and to keep Frodo safe. His royal side starts to show for he is born to lead and set an example for others to follow, and this role he completes with a flying colour.

3.3.1.2 *The Two Towers*

After the events of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and a hard battle against a herd of orcs, Merry and Pippin are taken hostage. Aragorn decides to lead Gimli and Legolas on a hunt for said orcs. They are terribly outnumbered, and the orcs have a several miles head start. That fact does not matter to Aragorn as he decides to run after and save them or die trying. *“We shall all need the endurance of Dwarves. But come! With hope we will follow the trail of our enemies. And woe to them, if we prove swifter! We will make such a chase as shall be accounted a marvel among the Three Kindreds: Elves, Dwarves and Men.”*⁵¹ The former leader of the Fellowship shows his purposefulness and his attempt to protect the helpless Hobbits.

As the reader goes through the story, one of the biggest battles breaks out, the Battle of Helm’s Deep. Aragorn dives a bit deeper into the role of a leader and with that takes another step into the role of the king he is to become. With his sword Andúril he decimates many of his foes and spreads fear with the fiery bright sword. After being pushed back into the last stand Aragorn again embraces his royal heritage. *“So great a power and royalty was revealed in Aragorn, as he stood there alone above the ruined gates before the host of his enemies, that many of the wild men paused, and looked back over their shoulder to the valley, and some looked up doubtfully at the sky.”*⁵² A foreshadowing of what he is to become once on the throne he would reach his full potential as a leader who is not afraid to face his adversaries.

⁵¹ TOLKIEN, John Ronald Ruel. *Pán prstenů: Dvě věže*. Vyd. 6., V Argu 3. Přeložil Stanislava POŠUSTOVÁ-MENŠÍKOVÁ. Praha: Argo, 2012. p. 18. ISBN 9788025707470.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 145.

3.3.1.3 *The Return of the King*

Aragorn is set to find the army of the dead, Gimli, Legolas and Dúnadan go with him. They all came to the Door of the Dead and no horse could go in for they were too afraid same as some of the men, Aragorn however led them with such strength of the will that all followed him even through the fear.⁵³ Aragorn's royal might start to show, he was a mere Strider that the reader met at The Prancing Pony. Fear overtook Gimli in this dark dungeon even though he is a Dwarf, but Aragorn walked even towards the unknown shining object in the darkness. "Does he feel no fear?"⁵⁴ asked himself Gimli for he did not expect someone to act more bravely than him in dungeons such as this. Even after Aragorn took over the ships with his new army, Legolas thought to himself how great and terrible Lord Aragorn could have become with the might such as his. Mordor is not afraid of Aragorn vainly, but his spirit is much nobler than Sauron understands.⁵⁵

The conclusion to the story of Aragorn is him becoming the King. He expresses the desire to having his crown brought by the Ring-bearer and being crowned by Gandalf. From our history we know that kings and emperors were crowned by a person who bestows a great power on them. Aragorn himself says that it was by others hard work that he came upon his inheritance and Gandalf kept all in motion therefore it is Gandalf's victory.⁵⁶ After all that Aragorn went through, he could have crowned himself, nevertheless, he did not want that, a great humility and humbleness is shown by these actions. The Strider is gone, he is the King of Gondor.

⁵³ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Návrat*, p. 55.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 56.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 153-154.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 251.

3.4 Wizards

Istari, the wizards, come to the Middle-earth after darkness falls over the Mirkwood. They belong to Maiar, the spirits created to help Valar shape the World. They take upon themselves a form of old but strong and wise men. The two first and highest in their order are Gandalf the grey, in Elvish known as Mithrandir, and Saruman the white, also known as Curumo and Curunír. Gandalf spends most of his time with the Elves, especially with Elrond. Mithrandir travelled through the West but did not settle anywhere.⁵⁷

When the readers encounter the Wizards, the first thing they notice when reading a passage about the Wizards is the fact that they possess a vast array of knowledge about the Middle-earth, in which lies an important part of their power, apart from their magical abilities. These abilities are, for example, elemental summoning and mind reading, which represent just a fraction of their complex abilities and powers. All of them could be harmed and even killed: After being killed, Istari would just go to the Timeless Halls. Eru Illúvatar then could send them back to set their foot upon Eä.⁵⁸

Magic in the world of J.R.R Tolkien is largely mythical and paranormal. The creatures that can use it are Elves and some Men apart from the Wizards, one of the great users is Lady Galadriel, daughter of Finarfin. Both Gandalf and Lord Elrond hold her in very high regard. All Wizards use a tall wooden staff to channel their spells. Throughout the Fellowship of the Ring, Gandalf uses his staff to summon fire even in the dire circumstances of Caradhras: Gandalf's words "Naur an edraith ammen! Naur dan i ngaurhoth!" can be roughly translated as "*Fire be for saving of us! Fire against the wolf-horde!*"⁵⁹ Another magical ability Gandalf uses is creating light for their passage through the dangerous darkness of Moria, late Dwarven kingdom. During the encounter with the Balrog in Moria, also known as Dúrin's bane, Gandalf should be evenly matched in power with him, since both are Maiar. Balrogs are Maiar corrupted by Melkor, also known as Morgoth the most vigorous and dangerous of the Ainur, and his darkness.

⁵⁷ Cf. The Lord of the Rings Wiki. Maiar. [online]. Retrieved from: <https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Maiar>

⁵⁸ Cf. The Lord of the Rings Wiki. Order of Wizards [online]. Retrieved from: https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Order_of_Wizards#Powers_&_abilities

⁵⁹ Elaran. [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.elfdict.com/phrases/1-sindarin/31-gandalfs_fire_spell?offset=undefined#120/2132

The sole objective of the Wizards is to protect free people from Sauron, Morgoth's second in command. Gandalf the grey, or Mithrandir, played an enormous part in the war against Sauron and the forces of evil. He influenced the party of Thorin Oakenshield and the other dwarves to retake their homeland, the mountain of Erebor. One of the reasons this party takes place is to prevent allegiance between the dark lord Sauron and the dragon Smaug.

3.4.1 Gandalf

3.4.1.1 *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The Council of Elrond is a major point of the story and Gandalf takes the lead of the Fellowship he is the wisest of them, knows the land and is incredibly powerful. However, as a leader he takes upon himself a great responsibility for the lives and safety of every member. Gandalf is everything others can look for in a leader. He provides a solution in every situation and provides guidance to everyone from highborn Aragorn to a simple creature like Hobbit.

One of the immediate dangers the company comes across during the passage of Caradhras, not counting the cold and harsh weather, are wolves. Gandalf uses his powers and summons a great fire to scare the wolves of and to provide light for his comrades to see. The reader sees the immense power of the Wizard for the first time. The Hobbits are helpless in this dire situation, they do not possess the strength to push through the snow nor can they fight of the wolves very well, this is where they turn to Gandalf for help, and he delivers it. For the Enemy, Gandalf is a dangerous adversary and needs to be taken care of, he knows it and still makes himself known on the mountain.

Moria is home to one of the most dangerous creatures in *The Lord of the Rings*, Balrog, also known as Durin's bane. Balrogs are Maiar⁶⁰, powerful servants of Morgoth, the most powerful Dark Lord. None other than Gandalf, who is also Maiar, could stand against him and he does. The Wizard is weakened by his encounter with the wolves on Caradhras, he neither flinches nor he thinks about and immediately goes toe to toe with the Balrog. It is on The Bridge of Khazad-dûm where Gandalf makes his last stand. Gandalf smote the bridge with his staff, and it broke under Balrog's feet.⁶¹ The creature during its fall still manages to nick Gandalf with its whip and with the words: "*Fly, you fools!*"⁶², he is gone. The most powerful member of the Fellowship paid the greatest prize for his friends. He knew the risks and still did not think twice about sacrificing himself.

⁶⁰ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Silmarillion*, p. 20.

⁶¹ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo*, p. 347.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 347.

3.4.1.2 *The Two Towers*

Maybe the biggest turning point for Gandalf is his return as Gandalf the White. The three pursuers meet him in the Fargorn forest disguised as an old man dressed in grey. The three heroes are suspicious of him being Saruman in disguise wanting to enchant them. They are ready to draw their weapons, but he just asks them not to do it and enchants them just with his words. He reveals himself to be Gandalf, *"Indeed I am Saruman, one might almost say, Saruman as he should have been."*⁶³ Gandalf is back and even more powerful, a new hope rises.

The battle of Helm's Deep is won, and Saruman is vulnerable. King Théoden, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Gandalf, Éomer and soldiers of Rohan come to Orthanc to confront Saruman. All the named apart from the soldiers come into the tower, Saruman tries to influence Théoden using his powers and soothing voice, Gandalf breaks this spell and overpowers Saruman greatly. Just by the words: *"your staff is broken"*⁶⁴, breaks his staff and uses his spells to command him. Despite all of Gandalf's newly gained powers and all the terrible things that Saruman did, Gandalf still offers him the chance to walk freely. This act of kindness shows how much Gandalf has grown and yet stayed the same, he is kind yet powerful and knows when to show and use his powers. Respect is something Gandalf reflects in all his actions.

⁶³ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Dvě věže*, p. 96.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 191.

3.4.1.3 *The Return of the King*

The city of Minas Tirith is under attack and the son of the steward, Faramir is gravely injured. The Nazgûl are attacking the city, but the steward chose to burn himself and his son, who he thinks is dead. Merry brings this news to Gandalf who fights to defend the city. Gandalf a man who always knows what to do and what is right, stands before a choice between the people of the city or Faramir. To make such a choice on the spot is immensely difficult and requires a very strong will. The Wizard chooses to help Faramir for he fears there is no one else to help him, but Gandalf knows that sorrow will come of this choice.⁶⁵

Gandalf's story is coming to an end in the Grey Havens where he is supposed to board a ship and sail off to Valinor together with Lady Galadriel and Lord Elrond. This marks a turning point for everyone. Throughout the story, The Hobbits, Legolas, Gimli, Aragorn would all come to Gandalf for guidance or help. He was not only a wise old man but everyone's dear friend who always knew how to help. The Wizard was a symbol of good and incorruptibility and all who knew him would have to learn to live without this beacon of light.

⁶⁵ Cf. TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Návrat*, p. 125-126.

3.4.2 Saruman

Saruman came upon Éa as Curunír, the name of Saruman came to him later. The Wise Council is established, and Saruman was named its leader, even though Lady Galadriel proposed Mithrandir. This is one of the first impulses that later would turn Saruman to the darkness, because he was very powerful from the beginning and ambitious. The order of Istari was sent upon Éa to fight Sauron so Saruman started to study about the Dark Lord. He saw Sauron more as his rival in power than that he hates the cruelty and terrible acts of Sauron. Saruman himself would be glad to find the One Ring, use it to rule and remade the World in his image.⁶⁶ The White Wizard, however, did not take side of Sauron of Mordor, but desires to become a new power in the World.⁶⁷ The evil of Sauron is not the reason of Saruman's fall it is, however, his vanity and desire for power. Give a man enough power and he shall reveal his nature, Saruman is a great example of this. Gandalf went to Saruman for some advice after learning that Frodo owns the One Ring. Passing through the gate of Isengard, Gandalf felt fear but did not know why that would be. Saruman offered Gandalf to join him in power and ruling. Gandalf does not agree to this, but notice that robe of Saruman looked no longer white, but had a shade of many colours.⁶⁸

Saruman's desire brings his downfall upon him when Gandalf returns as White, he breaks Saruman's staff and takes his place as the most powerful wizard and excommunicates him from the Wise Council. In one of the chapters is mentioned that Gandalf, after his return, is what Saruman should have been. Since Gandalf's return the magic power of Saruman diminishes apart from his influence and strong will remains with his voice. *"Those who listened unwarily to that voice could seldom report the words that they heard; and if they did, they wondered, for little power remained in them. Mostly they remembered only that it was a delight to hear the voice speaking, all that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves. When others spoke, they seemed harsh and uncouth by contrast [...]"*⁶⁹ Those who were under the influence of Saruman were easily freed by Gandalf.

⁶⁶ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Silmarillion*, p. 283-285.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 285.

⁶⁸ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo*, p. 273.

⁶⁹ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Dvě věže*, p. 185.

3.5 Hobbits

Hobbits are little people (shorter than Dwarves) firstly mentioned in *The Hobbit*. They tend to themselves not taking care in others, nevertheless, are very generous and settled in a place called Shire. They are known for their love of eating and drinking. Hobbits go around barefoot and do not need any boots or foot covers since their feet have a thick layer of fat. J.R.R Tolkien took an inspiration to making Hobbits in English countrymen. They also were generous, tending to themselves but no less heroic than others.

3.5.1 Frodo

3.5.1.1 *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Frodo Baggins is a nephew of Bilbo Baggins and knows all about Bilbo's journey to the Lonely Mountain. Frodo achieves adulthood on his 33rd birthday, same day as Bilbo's 111th birthday, it is on this day when Bilbo disappears in front of his guests and leaves the Shire to go to Rivendell. Bilbo leaves his magical ring to Frodo, with some help from Gandalf who grew suspicious of the ring over time, so the Wizard goes to Minas Tirith to look for answers. After 17 years Gandalf comes back and brings dire news. After Frodo and Gandalf throw the ring into the fireplace and the language of Mordor written in elvish comes out shining.⁷⁰ It is certain Frodo did inherit the One Ring from Bilbo. Gandalf briefs Frodo about the history of the Ring and Frodo learns that Bilbo finding the One Ring might have been more than just a coincidence. It is no surprise that Frodo holds no love for Gollum, the owner of the Ring before Bilbo, but once again Gandalf teaches him about not carrying out the sentence of death too harshly.⁷¹ Still after all of this, Frodo takes the One Ring and after proper arrangements sets out on the journey to the Prancing Pony where he shall meet with Gandalf. Frodo sets out on a journey even after all the things he learns about the terrible item he is to carry and still he does not back up.

Frodo is in a company of Sam, Merry, Pippin and Aragorn, the Strider, but unfortunately, they are all hunted by the Nazgûl. The Nine is one of the most dangerous adversaries the heroes come across and are bound to the One Ring. The fear which they embody so enormous that Merry, Pippin and Sam fall to the ground once approached by the

⁷⁰ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo*, p. 59-60.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 69.

three of the Nazgûl. *“Terror overcame Pippin and Merry, and they threw themselves flat on the ground. Sam shrank to Frodo’s side.”*⁷² Frodo fell under the sensation to put on the Ring and saw the Ringwraiths in their former bodies, this is a pure horror for Frodo. The little Hobbit draws his own sword to fight back, Frodo shows his indomitable spirit, in a moment of pure despair he shall fight if he can. He struck at the feet of his foe but in return he suffered an injury on his left shoulder with a poisonous morgul blade. This injury will never properly heal.

The Fellowship breaks and after Frodo’s encounter with Boromir where, he tries to take the One Ring from Frodo to use it. Such an encounter demonstrates the level of influence that this instrument of evil possesses. Frodo decides to leave everyone and to go on alone for it is safer this way. His way is to the land of Mordor the last place of desire for everyone, and Frodo is to go there alone, he takes a great risk of his own life, but he does it for a chance of better life for all. For Frodo this moment can be his exceeding the return threshold, where the hero leaves the land, he knows and goes into the land of darkness.⁷³ Fortunately, Sam catches up to Frodo, who is on a boat, and almost drowns. Since Frodo’s departure Sam and he never meet with anyone from the Fellowship until it is all over and the One Ring is destroyed. To bear the ring is to be alone.

⁷² TOLKIEN, J.R.R., *Pán prstenů: Společenstvo*, p. 209.

⁷³ Cf. CAMPBELL, J. *Tisíc tváří*, p. 197.

3.5.1.2 *The Two Towers*

I chose this part of the book because, Frodo and Sam must face their terrifying enemy with any help. With the Barrow-wights they had Tom Bombadil and Aragorn helped them against the Nazgûl, but now Frodo and Sam are alone. Shelob is a terrible creature of pure darkness, a spider. Frodo and Sam are in complete darkness, they only hear and smell that something is closing in on them. Frodo grabs the Phial from Galadriel into one hand the Sting into the other and with the light of Eärendil walks towards the spider. Such act might have been foolish in the moment but shows Frodo's growth from a simple Hobbit to a Hobbit who faces a creature of darkness and is older than Sauron himself.⁷⁴

3.5.1.3 *The Return of the King*

Frodo and Sam come a long way since the Shire and their journey is nearly at an end. The closer they both are to the Mount Doom the more the One Ring fights back, it gets heavier and heavier. Frodo cannot use anything but his will and strength to go forward. Sam wants to ease Frodo's burden and take the Ring for a while but Frodo is almost at its grasp so he snaps at Sam, warning him that he might succumb to madness.⁷⁵ It is almost heartbreaking to see a little but brave Hobbit be slowly taken by such great Evil but trying to keep going not just for himself but for others.

At last, they arrived at the Mount Doom, the only place where the One Ring can be destroyed. Frodo is faced with the decision, to destroy it or not. This place is where the will of the Ring is strongest, where the evil cannot be overpowered. This is why this moment is important for Frodo's character for he is taken over by the One Ring and puts it on. Frodo however cannot be blamed for being taken over by evil for none could resist the One Ring at this point. After this Frodo fights with Gollum over precious and Gollum falls in the fire pit with the One Ring, it can be said that it was the creature who wanted the One Ring most of all that destroyed it. On the other hand, the One Ring would not be in Mordor if not for Frodo. Through his story, Frodo makes three giant mistakes, he tries to fight the Nazgûl, he grows too confident with Shelob, and he tries to keep the One Ring to himself. For each of these transgressions he is punished.

⁷⁴ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Dvě věže*, p. 341.

⁷⁵ TOLKIEN, J. R. R., *Pán prstenů: Návrat*, p. 217.

Conclusion

My bachelor thesis firstly describes the life of J.R.R Tolkien and what influenced him to create his fantasy masterpiece. Next up I read theoretical literature about the epic and classical fairy tales and their influence on Tolkien's work. The thesis suggests that the characters in the epic and classical fairy tales do not change and the reader always knows exactly who or what they are. The heroes are always capable of defeating their foes and overcoming obstacles before them. On the other hand, the figures in modern fairy tales and novels are more complex. The heroes can be injured, their enemies can present danger to them, and the heroes can even die. Moreover, antagonists and villains of these stories are given more depth to their character so the reader can be more sympathetic to them, which can be found also in Tolkien.

Another step was to describe what heroism is and what does it mean. It is a multicultural knowledge: all heroes are same in their core, they are brave, selfless, strong, intelligent, etc. The hero does not need to be a big muscular man who can defeat anything and anyone in his path. For example, Frodo is the exact opposite: he is a normal Hobbit, who keeps to himself and likes to eat and drink. Heroes come in all shapes and forms.

In the practical part I picked several races: Elves, Dwarves, Men, Hobbits and Wizards. For each race I presented their origin and a short example of their history and morals. Elves are known for their immortality and nobility. Dwarves are furious fighters and are also very stubborn. Men possess the gift of Men, which means they can die of an old age. It also means that their concept of life is completely different from that of other races. Hobbits keep to themselves, they like to drink and eat, they are very generous and friendly and they lead simple lives. Wizards are an order of powerful magic users, whose objective is to fight Sauron, they are old, wise and they represent force to be reckoned with.

The discussed heroes are Aragorn for Men, Legolas for Elves, Gimli for Dwarves, Gandalf for Wizards, and Frodo for Hobbits. Aragorn develops from a mere ranger, whom the reader meets at The Prancing Pony where he defends four little Hobbits, into the king of Gondor that united Rohan and Gondor. He finds and frees the dead army and marries his love, Arwen. Legolas and Gimli work on their hatred for each other and they succeed. When forming of the Fellowship, they cannot stand each other. It is in Lothlórien where Gimli finds comfort

in the eyes of Lady Galadriel and the relationship between Legolas and Gimli starts to get better. After this adventure both are inseparable. Gimli is even granted passage into Valinor. Gandalf is the wise leader of the Fellowship who in the beginning seems harmless and not so special. It is in Moria, where we can see him in his full strength. Unfortunately, he dies after encountering Balrog. However, he comes back even stronger in the second book, his development comes from his return and power.

Last but not least, Frodo may be the most improbable out of all members of the Fellowship to carry the One Ring. He goes from being just an ordinary Hobbit to the hero of Middle-earth, who destroys the One Ring. Since Frodo is a simple being that has no special desires, the One Ring does not have that big influence on him, however, the closer he is to Mordor, the more powerful the One Ring gets. Eventually Frodo succumbs to evil, but none could resist in the Mound Doom after so long. All the discussed heroes come through some kind of development, however, everyone's growth is different and experienced on a different scale.

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