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The Character of Gandalf in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

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ČESTNÉ PROHLÁŠENÍ

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci na téma “The Character of Gandalf in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*“ vypracovala samostatně pod vedením doc. Mgr. Janky Kašćákové, PhD. a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Anotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Klára Dostrašilová
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Název práce:	Postava Gandalfa v J.R.R. Tolkienově Pán Prstenů
Název v angličtině:	The Character of Gandalf in J.R.R. Tolkien's <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>
Zvolený typ práce:	Výzkumná práce - zpracování primárních dat
Anotace práce:	Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou postavy Gandalfa v trilogii <i>Pán Prstenů</i> od J.R.R. Tolkiena. Hlavním cílem je zjistit, jestli Gandalf v díle zastává roli průvodce, učitele a mentora. Práce se také věnuje Gandalfově původu a úkolu, který má ve Středozemi vykonat. Pomocí jeho vztahu k vybraným postavám pak práce analyzuje vliv na vývoj příběhu.
Klíčová slova:	Gandalf, Frodo, Saruman, Théoden, Pippin, J.R.R. Tolkien, Istari, Středozemě, Pán Prstenů, mentor, průvodce, učitel
Anotace v angličtině:	This bachelor's thesis deals with analysis of the character of Gandalf in <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> by J.R.R. Tolkien. The main aim is to determine Gandalf's role in the story as a guide, teacher and a mentor. The thesis then provides information

	about Gandalf's origin and the task he is entrusted with in Middle-earth. Through investigation of his relationships with selected characters, the thesis analyses his impact on the trajectory of <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> ' narrative.
Klířová slova v angličtině:	Gandalf, Frodo, Saruman, Théoden, Pippin, J.R.R. Tolkien, Istari, Middle-earth, <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> , mentor, guide, teacher
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List of Abbreviations

Pippin	Peregrin Took
LOTR	The Lord of the Rings

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis examines one of the main characters from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Gandalf. The aim of this thesis is to analyze Gandalf's role in the storyline of the trilogy and the impact he has on other characters as their guide, mentor, and teacher. Furthermore, it provides information about Gandalf's origin, his position within the Istari order, and the task he aspires to fulfill in Middle-earth. Considering such analysis of Tolkien's work, the thesis defines how Gandalf influences certain characters within the narrative using various methods to accomplish his purpose in the story. The results presented confirm that Gandalf had fulfilled his task in the narrative and significantly influenced selected characters.

Introduction

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has long captivated the interest of many with its inspiring and rich narrative full of self-sacrifice, honor, and duty. Ever since I decided to become a teacher, I sought characters embodying the virtues and qualities that resonate with the responsibilities of an educator. Such a character could serve as a source of motivation and inspiration, guiding teachers to make a positive impact in the lives of their students. Amidst my search, Gandalf's character emerged as particularly relatable and compelling to me, leading me to choose the analysis of his character as a topic of my thesis.

In Tolkien's narrative, Gandalf primarily functions as a teacher, mentor, and guide to other characters. However, his role extends beyond mere instruction and guidance, as he observes those around him and responds sensitively to their needs. He is undeniably a widely recognized character, known to many who have not even read *The Lord of the Rings*. His character has been thoroughly investigated multiple times through various perspectives. However, there is little analysis delving into the complexities of his motivation behind guiding and mentoring other characters, and the profound impact his guidance has on shaping their actions and development, which consequently influences the whole storyline.

Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to analyze the character of Gandalf: his origin, the task he is entrusted with, and how his advice and guidance shape the lives of characters around him. Gandalf's role in the story is intricately intertwined with other people's fates, making it necessary to comprehensively analyze certain aspects of their storylines. Such an assessment offers a deeper understanding of Gandalf's persona along with the impact he has on the trajectory of the story. Therefore, the objective is not only to analyze Gandalf's relationships, but also to assess how he indirectly affected the overall plot progression through his guidance of selected key characters.

The thesis is divided into two chapters. The first one called "The Origin of Gandalf" explores Gandalf's role in Tolkien's Middle-earth, conducting a thorough analysis to determine whether he fulfills his calling in the narrative or not. This chapter is crucial as Gandalf's origin and calling serve as a driving force behind his actions, as is further explored in the rest of the thesis. Thus, the second chapter aims to investigate whether Gandalf has fulfilled the quest with which he had been sent to Middle-earth. To analyze this idea, the chapter is subdivided into several sections, each assessing Gandalf's commitment to his quest

through the lens of a specific character. These subchapters examine how Gandalf's interactions and guidance shape the destinies of a few selected characters: Frodo Baggins, Saruman the White, Théoden of Rohan and Peregrin Took. These characters have been selected, because each is uniquely guided and influenced by Gandalf, and each under different circumstances and with various outcomes. Consequently, the chapter will also contemplate the broader implications of how the selected characters under Gandalf's guidance shape the entire narrative.

In summary, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze Gandalf's role in the storyline of *The Lord of the Rings*, the motivation influencing his behavior and the impact he has on other characters as their guide, mentor, and a teacher. The author of this thesis hopes to contribute to the scholarly discourse surrounding Tolkien's masterpiece and offer new insights and fresh perspective into the significance of Gandalf's character.

1 Gandalf's Origin and Purpose in Middle-earth

Though Gandalf's origin is not extensively covered in the main *The Lord of the Rings* narrative, having insight into his background proves valuable for comprehending his motives and behavior throughout the story. Furthermore, uncovering and examining the driving force behind his actions is crucial for analysis of his relationship with other characters. This chapter will cover Gandalf's arrival to Middle-earth, his origin, appearance and his role in the events of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, we do not encounter any explanation or simple mention of the Istari's true identity. However, we can form a comprehensive image of their nature based on Tolkien's other work. In his letters, Tolkien continuously refers to the group as "angelic beings": "They were as one might say the near equivalent in the mode of these tales of Angels, guardian Angels." (Tolkien, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, pg. 176, to Naomi Mitchison¹). However, the correct term for these beings are Maiar – spirits, whose creation long predated the World's creation (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 40). Together, they formed a noble and well-respected Istari order, colloquially referred to as *Wizards*. The group consisted of Saruman the White - the head of the order, Radagast the Brown, and two Blue Wizards, who are rarely mentioned.

The word "istar" originates from Tolkien's artificial language "Quenya". Its fitting translation to the common language is "wise" and other words relating to knowledge. Another translation mentioned by Tolkien in his letters is "those who know" (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray). Subsequently, the word's definition later developed into a widely adopted term used for members of the Istari order – "the wizards." (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 397). These labels are a proof of their most important task: to counsel; and were used long before Men realized that the wizards' capabilities exceed powers of ordinary mortals.

The Wizards, appearing in Middle-earth during Sauron's resurgence, concealed their true nature, leaving many intrigued by their extraordinary powers and unknown character. Gandalf's origin (along with the origin of other Istari) remained unknown to most, aside from Círdan, Elrond and Galadriel (1954, letter n. 144, to Naomi Mitchison). They first appeared around the year 1000 during the Third Age, when Sauron's power had started to grow once

¹ All references to Tolkien's letters are from https://bibliothecaveneficae.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/the_letters_of_j.r.tolkien.pdf without page numbers and will be noted with date and recipient in parentheses.

again (1954, letter n. 144, to Naomi Mitchison). Landing in the Grey Havens, they were approached by Círdan, Master of the Havens. Initially, they were believed to be ordinary Men who acquired their skills and knowledge by thorough study. However, with the escalating growth of Sauron's power, the wizards increasingly involved themselves in various affairs. It soon became apparent to Men that Istari are not ordinary mortals and that their power exceeds their limitation of knowledge (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 397). Just as the People of Middle-earth are baffled by the Istari's true origin, the reader is left wondering too, due to the limited information offered by the books. Tolkien claims: "Nowhere is the place or nature of 'the Wizards' made fully explicit." (1951, letter n. 131, to Milton Waldman). Thus, we know very little of the Wizards, having only a few of Tolkien's essays and passages that speak about this matter.

The Istari arrived as Emissaries of the Uttermost West beyond the Sea. They shared an important task: to support and unite the inhabitants of Middle-earth in their resistance and fight against Sauron (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 397). In a letter to R. Murray, Tolkien offers a detailed description of the given task: "to train, advise, instruct, arouse the hearts and minds of those threatened by Sauron to a resistance with their own strengths; and not just to do the job for them." (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray). The Valar, who entrusted the Istari with this quest, were aware of the importance of free will and self-determination of Free Peoples of Middle-earth, so they prohibited the Istari from seeking to rule over the Children of Ilúvatar, as indicated in the appendix of *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 2005, pg. 1084²). Such a prohibition emphasizes a broader theme of Tolkien's work: consequences of unchecked ambition and abuse of power. Valar's intervention by sending help to Middle-earth marked a pivotal moment in the history of their continent, because it is presumed that without Gandalf specifically, people of Middle-earth would not be able to defeat a 'divine' being like Sauron (1956, letter n. 181, to Michael Straight).

Despite not being human, each of the Istari was incarnated into a living form of elderly men. Though their spirits were immortal, their bodies did age, slowly and were always in danger of being killed (1951, letter n. 131, to Milton Waldman). The incarnation allowed them to experience life in a similar manner as People of Middle-earth did; to feel pain of both body and mind, to enjoy, to fear, to grow weary with long labour, etc. (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray). As a result, they were capable to understand the ordinary beings better. Also, for this

² All references are to this edition and will further be noted with abbreviation „LOTR“ and page numbers in parentheses.

very reason, they were also able to stray from the mission that they were sent to do, as they also felt desire, impatience and longing for power (1956, letter n. 181, to Michael Straight). Gandalf was the only member of Istari who resisted the temptation to abandon their task, even though he had to give the ultimate sacrifice: his own life. According to Tolkien, due to Gandalf's identity as "higher being", his sacrifice might be even greater than a sacrifice of mortal person, as he perished in defence of his companions, which might have left all his deeds of resistance against Sauron vanish in vain (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray).

The Istari order wielded power in the form of knowledge covering the mysteries of the known world. (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 397) Each of the Istari carried his unique staff, serving as a medium to channel his magical abilities, although they could harness magic independently when required. The staff also served as a token of their power. When defeated, the staff would be broken, as we witness during Gandalf the White's confrontation with Saruman at the tower of Orthanc (*LOTR*, pg. 583). Additionally, every Istari had a field of powers in which they excelled (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 403). Gandalf's ultimate power was compassion and wisdom, which proved essential while mentoring and guiding other characters, as he foresaw many things which befell them later (1958, letter n. 211, to Rhona Beare). Ruud suggests that "his [Gandalf's] greatest strength is in his ability to lead and to persuade," (2010, pg. 150) – skills he has applied on many occasions throughout the narrative. Saruman on the other hand was skillful in crafts and persuasive in speech. Radagast's special ability was his close relationship to beast and birds (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 372).

In his letters, Tolkien mentions that Istari, just as Valar, do not bear a name, just an identity. Therefore, any name referring to the members of the Istari order was given to them by either Elves or Men (1958, letter n. 211, to Rhona Beare). However, in *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien does use names to refer to the specific Maiar spirits. For instance, Gandalf's true name/identity is Olórin, who is said to be the wisest of all Maiar, characterized with compassion and love for the Children of Ilúvatar (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 41). While the wizards concealed their true names, the People of Middle-earth granted them various appellations. Gandalf was the name attributed to the wizard by Men of the North. According to Hardwick (2022), it is also the name by which he is known the most, reflecting the dominance of Men across the realm. The meaning of the name Gandalf - 'the Elf of the Wand' is a misconception arising from people mistakenly associating him with an Elf due to their various shared attributes. However, amongst the Elven folk, he acquired a different name. Mithrandir, he was

called, originating from Sindarin with the meaning “The Grey Pilgrim” (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 399). Additionally, dwarves had yet another name for him: Tharkûn, symbolizing the staff, which he always bore with him. *Greybeard*, *Incámus* (acquired in Harad), *Stormcrow*, *Grayhame* and *The White Rider* are just a few of other titles labeled to the wizard. Conclusively, Gandalf garnered numerous names, however, it is acknowledged that upon his return to Valinor, he reverted to his true name, Olórin (Brown, 2022, par. 4-5).

It is said that only one of the Istari remained faithful to the errand that they were entrusted with by the Valar, and that was Gandalf. Saruman the White was consumed by the darkness growing within him as he succumbed to his pride and desire for power and knowledge. His feeling of superiority eventually led to his own demise. Radagast the Brown abandoned Elves and Men for the company of beasts and wilderness. While he did not consciously betray the good People of Middle-earth, he failed to accomplish his task and, at its core, disobeyed the orders of the Valar (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 399) And lastly, the Blue Wizards, Alatar and Pallando, have their fates veiled in mystery. Although the deeds of the Blue Wizards are not explicitly mentioned in the tales of Middle-earth, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, they might have contributed to the cause of defeating Sauron, unseen. However, there is a solid evidence against theories of the sort, for Tolkien writes in *The Silmarillion* that the Blue Wizards do not come to his tales as they disappeared to the east of Middle-earth, (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 372) and in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* we learn that they might have fallen to the darkness and become Sauron’s followers or cult leaders (1958, letter n. 211, to Rhona Beare). In finality, among the Istari only Gandalf stayed true to his mission in Middle-earth; and he had done well, as in *The Silmarillion*, we read about the events of *The Lord of the Rings*: “Now all these things were achieved for the most part by the counsel and vigilance of Mithrandir” (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 378). As a result, he was the only Wizard who was allowed to return to the place where they came from, the Far West (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 404).

It is suggested that Gandalf would succumb to the darkness, had he used his powers more often. Ruud claims Gandalf could have done more to aid the Free Peoples of Middle-earth, yet he has chosen not to do so (2010, pg. 150). Furthermore, Gandalf considers himself “very dangerous: more dangerous than anything you will ever meet, unless you are brought alive before the seat of the Dark Lord” (*LOTR*, pg. 499). Considering his abilities, the question remains: why has not the wizard done more? A possible explanation presents that had Gandalf manifested his magical skills more often, he would have become too reliant on

them, which could consequently lead into strengthened notion of his superiority over his surroundings. He would have failed in his quest then just like Saruman has, choosing to rule over others rather than guiding them through hardship (Ruud, 2010, pg. 150).

Gandalf stands out with distinctive characteristics that set him apart from other wizards. Firstly, he is a wanderer who does not dwell in one place for too long. Unlike Saruman with his Orthanc or Radagast with his dwelling in Mirkwood (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 399). Before the dangerous re-arise of Sauron's shadow, Gandalf "wandered long (in various guises), engaged not in deeds and events but in exploring the hearts of Elves and Men who had been and might still be expected to be opposed to Sauron." (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 406). He did not engage himself in the matter of the People, yet. Secondly, he had an unusual love and knowledge of Halflings (commonly referred to as Hobbits), presuming that they might play an important part in the defeat of Sauron (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 407).

Among other powers that Gandalf wields, there is one of great importance: he is a keeper of one of the Rings of Power, the Ring of Fire, called Narya the Red. The possession of this ring might be the reason why Gandalf controls light. The Ring was given to him by Círdan, the Master of Grey Havens, upon his arrival to Middle-earth. He chose Gandalf to be the bearer, as he considered him to be the wisest of the Istari despite him seeming "less tall than the others, and in looks more aged, grey-haired and grey-clad, and leaning on a staff." (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 398). Furthermore, he was aware that Gandalf has a great peril ahead of him and the Ring might help him "rekindle hearts to the valour of old in a world that grows chill" (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 378). Gandalf's weak and fragile appearance, his inferiority to Saruman, his reluctance to take on the quest while still in the True West for fear that he is not strong enough, are all parts of Tolkien's continuous theme; that those who look small, weak, inferior and insignificant are the ones to do great and selfless deeds, impacting the history of the World.

Gandalf was the true Enemy of Sauron and his opposite in many ways. For where Sauron wished to rule and to control, Gandalf wished to give counsel and help. While Sauron ruled with a fire that devoured and destroyed, Gandalf ruled with a warm fire of hopefulness, protecting and motivating many. Sauron wanted to have an appearance of a majestic and all-powerful dictator, but Gandalf hid his knowledge and compassion underneath old and weary grey clothes (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 399). Tolkien states that "Gandalf's opposite was, strictly, Sauron..." (1954, letter n. 144, to Naomi Mitchison). However, as much as they are different,

they still have many things in common, which makes the difference in their fates so much more impactful. For instance, both belong to the same kind, Maiar. They are both powerful, yet their full capabilities are restricted by the Valar, as we learn in *The Silmarillion* (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 32). Additionally, Sauron just as Gandalf must eventually face the consequences for their actions in front of the Valar. This contrast highlights Gandalf's essential role as the true adversary of Sauron, embodying principles of counsel, protection, and benevolence in opposition to the tyrannical aspirations of the Dark Lord.

As it was demonstrated in the previous paragraph, Gandalf functions as Sauron's opposite. Other protagonists behave similarly, as Tolkien's world functions on certain principle – that good can never behave as evil, even if lingering on such values happens to be inconvenient and difficult (Chisholm, 2019, pg. 100). However, Dickerson argues that there is one instance in which Gandalf acts against the ethics established to be upheld by Tolkien's heroes (2012, pg. 30). Though it is not said directly, it is mentioned that while interrogating Gollum, Gandalf had used rather harsh techniques to get the truth out of him. His words “I put the fear of fire on him, and wrung the true story out of him” (*LOTR*, pg. 57) borderline on use of force on a defenseless creature. So, what makes his action seems justifiable, when his behavior aligns with certain cruel tactics of the enemy? As Dickerson claims, the reader wants to admire Gandalf, defending him by claiming that “the end justifies its means” (2012, pg. 31). So, in reality, it is very easy for a reader to overlook this specific example of Gandalf's questionable actions.

It might look to some like Gandalf did stray away from his mission from time to time. For example, the whole plot of *The Hobbit* seems to not have anything to do with Gandalf's fight against Sauron. However, in an appendix to *The Lord of the Rings*, we learn that the motive for Gandalf's desire to slay Smaug was rooted in a fear that he would make a powerful and devastating ally to Sauron, had he stayed alive for the events of Lord of the Rings. Therefore, not even during the narrative of *The Hobbit* did Gandalf deviate from his task as the Emissary from the West, because he tried to take out Sauron's possible future allies. Additionally, his actions prior to *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* were also indicating his full commitment to his task. He vigilantly walked among the Men and Elves, getting to know their ways. This allowed him to build relationships later significant for fulfilling his calling (1951, letter n. 131, to Milton Waldman).

2 Gandalf as a Guide in Relation to Selected Characters

The previous chapter discussed in depth Gandalf's mission in Middle-earth: "to train, advise, instruct, arouse the hearts and minds of those threatened by Sauron to a resistance with their own strengths; and not just to do the job for them," given to him by the Valar (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray). In continuity, this chapter focuses on how he achieved this goal through his personal involvement in the lives of a few selected characters: Saruman, Frodo Baggins, king Théoden, and Peregrin Took. Their relationships are analyzed with emphasis on how Gandalf influenced their behavior, how he guided them through hardship, what he taught them and whether or not they acted accordingly to his counsel.

Gandalf's role in the lives of key characters is best described as their *guide*, *mentor*, and *teacher*. Chance argues that Gandalf's task was to "guide and protect all of Middle-earth" (2001, pg. 114), which is supported by the fact that the Istari were called to *guide* the People of Middle-earth through their labors against Sauron (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 397). The following analysis will delve into the particular methods or situations, where Gandalf's influence was apparent, as he actively guided or mentored the characters in order to reach their full potential in fighting against the evil forces of Sauron.

2.1 Frodo

Frodo and Gandalf's relationship offers a unique insight into Gandalf's role as a guide, because unlike the other characters analyzed in this thesis, Frodo's acquaintance with Gandalf traces back to his childhood, instilling within him a deep respect for Gandalf. This respect verges on childish admiration, suggesting that Frodo idolizes the wizard. He even goes as far as calling Gandalf "best of friends" (*LOTR*, pg. 59). Another specific aspect of their relationship is that they interact only in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and do not meet again until the middle of *The Return of the King*. However, Gandalf's influence on the hobbit is evident even in the time of his absence, which will be examined in this subchapter as well.

Hjort suggests Gandalf is a perfect mentor to Frodo, as he spent years studying and observing the Hobbits, therefore he can understand his nature and motivation better (2013, pg. 7). Gandalf had already guided one hobbit (Bilbo Baggins) through a dangerous adventure during the events of *The Hobbit*, therefore he has previous experience in this matter. Furthermore, Frodo needs someone to teach him of the temptations he will face while carrying the Ring; and someone to prepare him to face the possible dangers and struggles

awaiting him on his journey. Once again, Gandalf fits perfectly into such a role, as he is the true “Enemy of Sauron” (*LOTR*, pg. 971) and has long studied the Ring and its history. Ultimately, Gandalf has watched the hobbit grow up, therefore he is closely acquainted with Frodo’s personality, making it easier to understand him. These reasons make it apparent that there is no one else more suitable to guide Frodo through hardship awaiting him.

Frodo is very much willing to be shaped and guided by Gandalf, as he continuously asks for his opinions and instructions. This argument is supported by many scenes, such as Frodo asking: “O Gandalf, best of friends, what am I to do?” (*LOTR*, pg. 59) as he does not know how to deal with the Ring. However, Gandalf makes sure to not do every decision for the hobbit, teaching him to make independent choices (Hjort, 2013, pg. 13-14). For instance, during the Council of Elrond, Gandalf has not decided that Frodo should become the Ring-bearer. Such a decision was done by Frodo, as he independently offered to take on the task. After Gandalf’s death at the Bridge of Khazad-dûm, Frodo loses the wizard’s guidance and is forced to find his own path. Thanks to their separate storylines during *The Two Towers* and majority of *The Return of the King*, Frodo’s character is allowed to develop individually.

Gandalf guides Frodo through many perils by being the example himself, as witnessed in many parallel scenes throughout the trilogy. Firstly, before Frodo sets out on his journey, he offers Gandalf the Ring. Gandalf refuses, setting an example for Frodo, as he faces the temptation of the Ring throughout the whole narrative. Secondly, Gandalf sends Samwise Gamgee on the quest as Frodo’s companion as a means of punishment for eavesdropping on their conversation. Similarly, Frodo accepts the help of Gollum. Finally, Gandalf’s emphasis on free will and the value of choice serves as a third instance, exemplified through the scene where Gandalf offers Frodo to decline his task as a Ring Bearer. Frodo imitates this behavior many times during his journey to Mordor, for example when he gives Meriadoc Brandybuck and Peregrin Took the option to not leave the Shire or when he gives Sam a choice to either turn back and return home, or to embark on the journey to Mordor. These scenes highlight Gandalf’s role as a significant influence and mentor in Frodo’s life, suggesting that Gandalf serves as a powerful role model for him.

When Frodo offers Gandalf his Ring, Gandalf refuses, claiming that the Ring would rule through him with terrible power. By his reaction, it is implied that Gandalf cannot even do as little as touch the Ring without fear of succumbing to its power. Therefore, Gandalf probably assumed that he cannot be the one to eventually carry the Ring out of the Shire. To

look in advance for someone to do it in his place would be only logical; and who would be a better option for that than one related to the current bearer, Bilbo Baggins, who has proven to be able to carry the Ring for years with little effect on his person (Chance, 2001, pg. 28)? Gandalf does not necessarily assume that Frodo will take the Ring, but it is possible he had foreseen the potential and begun to prepare the young hobbit accordingly (Chance, 2001, pg. 27). Thus, Gandalf and Bilbo initiate Frodo's training in the customs of Men and Elves, anticipating that Frodo may one day play a role in the history of Middle-earth.

In preparation for Frodo's task to get the Ring to Rivendell, Gandalf actively listens to Frodo's fears and adequately reacts to them. For instance, when Frodo worries that he will have to set out alone, claiming "I feel so small. [...] The Enemy is so strong and terrible," (*LOTR*, pg. 62), Gandalf decides for him to be accompanied by Samwise Gamgee. Eventually it becomes apparent that such a decision was vital for the success of the task, as without Sam, Frodo would fail (Chance, 2001, pg. 35). Other examples appear each time Gandalf offers words of encouragement to Frodo when he sees it is needed. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gandalf admires the surprising nature of hobbits, lifting up Frodo's spirit as he doubts if he is enough for the quest. Later, when Frodo feels like he does not have enough courage, Gandalf chooses not to express his doubts, but instead encourages the growth of hope in the young hobbit. In conclusion, Gandalf manages to sensitively react to Frodo's doubts, offering words of encouragement and adequate support.

Gandalf makes sure that Frodo is aware of having his never-fading support, emphasizing that he is not alone in his task. He claims that "I will help you bear this burden as long as it is yours to bear," (*LOTR*, pg. 62). After the Council of Elrond, Gandalf reaffirms the hobbit. However, his promises are not fulfilled in a way they wish, as Gandalf and Frodo separate when Gandalf falls at Khazad-dûm, and they do not reunite until the destruction of the Ring. However, even in their separation, Gandalf reaches out to Frodo in his thoughts and does everything in his powers to aid him. His support is evident during Gandalf and Pippin's conversation in Minas or before that, when Tolkien explicitly states that: "his [Gandalf's] thought was ever upon Frodo and Samwise, over the long leagues his mind sought for them in hope and pity." (*LOTR*, pg. 644). Even the last march of the army of Free Peoples to the Black Gate of Mordor is executed because of Gandalf's wish to give Frodo a chance to slip to Mount Doom unseen and strengthen his chances at succeeding in his quest. This example is perhaps more significant than others, as it shows Gandalf's willingness to fulfill his

commitment to Frodo and to the Valar, even if that meant marching into a battle which they knew they cannot win.

Similarly to Gandalf's support of Frodo in the time of his absence, Frodo too does recall Gandalf's advice and acts accordingly, even though he believes Gandalf to be dead. One of the examples previously discussed in this chapter is Frodo showing mercy to Gollum, thinking of his conversation with Gandalf. Upon reaching the Black Gate of Mordor, Frodo recalls Gandalf's words and for a moment, he feels desperate and hopeless, as he cannot remember Gandalf's counsel, fearing that "Gandalf's guidance had been taken from them too soon..." (*LOTR*, pg. 644). At the forbidden pool, he begs Faramir not to kill Gollum, once again recalling Gandalf's advice. In certain instances, he listens to Gandalf's counsel even though he does not understand it, showing his humility and the respect he holds for the wizard.

Gandalf does not influence Frodo only through instructions, advice, and education, he also instills certain values within the hobbit. Chisholm claims that "grace is necessary for Frodo because otherwise his task is impossible," (2020). Gandalf's actions indicate that he is fully aware of this reality. Perhaps that is why he lectures Frodo on the importance of grace and forgiveness when they discuss Gollum's fate. Furthermore, Gandalf himself is full of grace, as he gives many characters second chances after their immediate failure (eg. Peregrin Took), or their utter betrayal (eg. Saruman). Therefore, Gandalf teaches Frodo the value of grace by being the example himself. Frodo then experiences the power of grace himself, when he spares Gollum's life out of pity and then Gollum's disobedience saves Middle-earth when Frodo fails in his quest (Chance, 2001, pg. 36). Unknowingly, Gollum's death tied to Frodo's failure fulfills Gandalf's prophecy: "My heart tells me that he [Gollum] has some part to play yet" (*LOTR*, pg. 59).

Numerous passages imply that Gandalf holds a deep affection for Frodo, stemming not solely from his vital role as a Ring bearer, but from a genuine fondness for the young hobbit and his uncle Bilbo Baggins. This argument is supported by the wizard's encounter with Faramir when he learns of the captain's meeting with Frodo. Gandalf's care is implied through his fearful reaction, uncommon for his character, as he listens to an account of Frodo's perils: "Pippin became aware that Gandalf's hands were trembling as they clutched the carven wood. White they seemed now and very old, and as he looked at them, suddenly with a thrill of fear Pippin knew that Gandalf, Gandalf himself, was troubled, even afraid."

(*LOTR*, pg. 811). Gandalf's affection for Frodo is clear enough that even the Messenger of Mordor tries to blackmail him, claiming to have imprisoned Frodo, mentioning him as "one dear to you" (*LOTR*, pg. 889). Even though Gandalf tries to keep a steady face "those nearby saw the anguish in his face, and now he seemed an old and wizened man, crushed, defeated at last" (*LOTR*, pg. 889). Gandalf, for the first time, appears utterly defeated. There are two possible explanations for his hopelessness though: his affection for Frodo, and his fear that his long perils have been wasted as the Ring has fallen to the hands of the Enemy at last.

Gandalf's reaction to Frodo's failures is also worthy of analysis. Aside from the obvious and significant scene where Frodo fails to fulfill his quest as the Ringbearer, there's a moment in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when Frodo receives negative feedback from Gandalf. Right after Frodo wakes up in Rivendell, he gets scolded by the wizard: "you are lucky to be here, too, after all the absurd things you have done since you left home." (*LOTR*, pg. 219). However, after scolding the young hobbit, he makes sure to praise him for his achievement as well, pointing out that by getting the Ring to Rivendell, Frodo has gained his respect and showed great courage. Through those words of encouragement, Gandalf offers Frodo constructive feedback, which is very important for mentoring relationship, as it allows the mentee to improve in things he struggles with, and yet to keep up his motivation (Center for Health Leadership & Practice, 2003, pg. 11). Considering the above, it could be assumed that Frodo would be reprimanded by Gandalf for succumbing to the power of the Ring following the events at Mount Doom. However, the wizard reacts in an entirely different manner. Although there is no record of the reunion of the two, Gandalf's reaction is implemented into his behavior. Symbolically, he kneels in front of Frodo and Samwise, as he ties their belts, implying admiration. Colbert suggests that in a sense, Frodo did not fail at Mount Doom, he was simply overcome with the power of the Ring (2002, pg. 173). Frodo's victory was achieved through showing mercy to Gollum, which was a value implemented into him by Gandalf. Had it not been for Gandalf's words, Frodo might have killed Gollum, and then the Ring would not have been destroyed. In summary, Gandalf's absence of feedback regarding Frodo's failure might be caused by him thinking he did not fail at all.

As previously discussed, Gandalf supports independence. Judging by his behavior one might presume, that Gandalf tends to cultivate independence through situation-based learning, when he disappears while other characters are in a certain dangerous situation, leaving them to navigate it themselves. This method Gandalf exhibited in events prior to *The Lord of the*

Rings when he left Frodo's uncle Bilbo (along with the whole company of Dwarves) to get captured by Goblins and waited as they tried to find their way out of danger (Tolkien, 2020, pg. 87-98). He acted similarly when he sent out the group of hobbits on their errand to get the Ring to Rivendell but had not reunited with them at The Prancing Pony. It is important to mention that he does not leave the group of hobbits on purpose, as he was currently held a prisoner by Saruman. However, it is implied that he previously expected not to make it in time to the town of Bree. Hence, he leaves a letter for them in case he does not make it. Consequently, he does everything in his powers to aid them and provide help that they might need. Thus, he sends Aragorn as his replacement, which develops into a time of growth and self-reliance for the whole group, including Frodo and Aragorn (Hjort, 2013 pg. 16-17).

As a final token of Gandalf and Frodo's relationship, Gandalf's arrangement to take the hobbit on a journey across the sea may be pointed out. Such an arrangement might be rooted in Gandalf's affection for Frodo. Gandalf has closely observed the hobbit, suspecting that his wound obtained at Weathertop does not heal. Furthermore, he has been worried that the Ring has affected hobbit's mental well-being, leading him to believe that Frodo would not have peace unless he leaves Middle-earth. However, even though Gandalf knew of Frodo's potential need to depart across the Sea, he does not worry Frodo with his prediction and waits for the hobbit to come to the conclusion himself in due time (1963, letter n. 246, to Eileen Elgar). Essentially, Gandalf allows him to make his own decision without pressuring him.

In summary, Gandalf serves mostly as an initiator of Frodo's adventures. He makes sure to guide and prepare Frodo for dangers ahead. He instructs him, obtains companions for him, and emphasizes some values which will prove significant later in the plot. Then Gandalf disappears from Frodo's storyline and the hobbit has to tackle with his task himself, leading into development hardly achievable had he stayed with Gandalf. So, even though Frodo starts as an unlikely and "soft" hero, he develops into a wiser and tougher character, willing to battle evil forces even if he had to sacrifice himself in the process (Colbert, 2002, pg. 171).

2.2 Saruman

Gandalf and Saruman's relationship has a unique character as it has developed under very specific circumstances. This is especially attributed to the fact, that at the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf holds a subordinate position to Saruman within their

hierarchy, while at the end of the story, he surpasses his master, ultimately gaining a position of authority over Saruman. That offers a peculiar comparison how each of them managed their role as a guide to the people of Middle-earth. However, their relationship is filled with rivalry, rather than healthy mentorship. Though at first it is Saruman who, as the head of the Istari order, is supposed to act as a mentor to Gandalf, in the end it is Gandalf who tries to guide Saruman out of his own treachery and give him yet another chance to turn to goodness. Additionally, their relationship is unlike any other in the trilogy due to their shared status as Maiar Spirits (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 403).

As described in detail in the second chapter of this thesis, Gandalf and Saruman are both Istari, who arrived to Middle-earth with the same calling – to navigate the Free Peoples of Middle-earth in their fight against Sauron (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray). However, despite Saruman being both the head of the Istari order and the head of the White Council, he eventually strays from his calling, while Gandalf literally gives his life for this quest, leading to Gandalf surpassing Saruman in both power and authority.

To achieve a deeper understanding of their difficult relationship filled with rivalry, it is necessary to mention a few events preceding the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*. Right upon arrival to Middle-earth, Gandalf is gifted with the Third Ring of Power, Narya the Red (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 398). Even though Gandalf keeps his Ring a secret, Saruman soon becomes aware of his precious possession and starts harboring resentment towards his companion. This may be considered a beginning of Saruman's animosity towards Gandalf, which in the events of *The Lord of the Rings* becomes very apparent (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 398). Another conflict worth mentioning is the establishment of the White Council. Galadriel wanted Gandalf to be the head of the Council due to his wisdom and humility. However, Gandalf refused such a position as he did not want to be bound by any other allegiance other than the one he has had with Valar (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 372-373). Galadriel's request was enough for Saruman to feel begrudged because his pride and notion of superiority were pulling him towards a deeper longing for power, making it impossible to understand why Gandalf's humbleness might be a trait more valuable than his skills. This seeming injustice has evolved into deeper resentment which Saruman holds against Gandalf. It becomes apparent when Gandalf presents his concerns regarding a growing darkness in Mirkwood, possibly connected to Sauron's return. He researched and confirmed this theory, but upon

reporting it to the White Council, Saruman dismissed it with little effort to remain polite (Tolkien, 2009b, pg. 373-374).

These events served as a catalyst for Saruman to harbor intense jealousy towards Gandalf. In *Unfinished Tales*, Tolkien claims that “Saruman soon became jealous of Gandalf, and this rivalry turned at last to a hatred, the deeper for being concealed, and the more bitter in that Saruman knew in his heart that the Grey Wanderer had the greater strength, and the greater influence upon the dwellers in Middle-earth” (2009a, pg. 360). On various occasions it is evident that Saruman belittles Gandalf every opportunity he gets, such as during his imprisonment at Orthanc, or in the aftermath at Isengard, then again after the victory of the Free Peoples when Gandalf and his hobbit companions meet Saruman again. Yet he remains aware of Gandalf’s power, fears him and studies every step he takes (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 360). This behavior suggests a peculiar mix of respect and resentment, which is typical for many of their interactions.

Saruman’s fear of Gandalf’s power is evident in his attempt to persuade Gandalf to join him in his quest to gain power over Middle-earth in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Firstly, he lures the subordinate wizard to his tower and then he tries to gain his alliance by using half-truths, flattery, promises and words of manipulation. According to Chisholm, it is impossible for Gandalf to accept such an offer, as Gandalf embodies the truth and hope that is ever-present in Tolkien’s heroes (2019, pg. 92). After Gandalf’s refusal to cooperate, Saruman regresses back to condescendence and imprisons him. The irony of Saruman’s treason lies in Gandalf’s pure intentions and hopefulness with which he arrives to Isengard, because he comes to seek help and counsel from the head of his order, whom he holds in respect. His respectful mentions of Saruman on various occasions indicate that he holds the White Wizard in high esteem. Shaw suggests that Gandalf had faithfully considered Saruman a superior mind and wiser than himself. It was Gandalf’s humbleness that eventually elevated him beyond Saruman’s status (Shaw, 2012).

Saruman's failure as a mentor to Gandalf becomes apparent as he consistently prioritizes self-interest over fulfilling his role as a guide and mentor to his subordinate wizard and other dwellers of Middle-earth. Saruman's actions are specific for their lack of genuine concern for Gandalf's development and well-being, focusing on furthering his own agenda and ambitions. This argument is supported on many occasions, for example through Saruman’s envious reaction upon Gandalf’s obtaining of the ring Narya (Tolkien, 2009a, pg.

398), or through Saruman's voluntary and solitary confinement to the Tower of Orthanc. Gandalf's genuine care and interest in others stands in clear contrast to Saruman's behavior. Therefore, when Gandalf dies, is resurrected, and receives new authority over Saruman, he acts in a very different manner towards his former mentor. He treats Saruman with patience, yet firmness, as evidenced by the encounter by the Tower of Orthanc or during their journey back to the Shire. He reprimands his former mentor for his wrongdoings, yet he repeatedly offers him another chance.

One of the possible interpretations of Gandalf's willingness to always offer Saruman a second chance is his understanding of Saruman's nature. Aside from the fact that they are both beings of the same kind, arriving to Middle-earth with the same calling, they both have an idea how to save Middle-earth. However, Saruman is blinded by pride, leading him to believe that he could set a new order to Middle-earth which would save the Free Peoples. This order, however, is only achievable if Saruman is the one with the Ring of Power. It is possible that he does not consider himself a villain as he is too deluded by his own pride. This circumstance may lead to Gandalf's continuous offers of repentance. Additionally, Gandalf might recall the good deeds which Saruman had done prior to the events of *The Lord of the Rings*, leading him to believe that he is not entirely lost. Moreover, Gandalf believes in the potential for good in even the most corrupted beings, as implied in his conversation with Frodo regarding the grace and mercy given to Gollum. Perhaps this grace should be presented even to a traitor such as Saruman.

As previously stated, Saruman and Gandalf's relationship changes significantly after Gandalf's death and resurrection, when he receives new authority over Saruman. Their encounter by the Tower of Orthanc in the chapter "The Voice of Saruman" serves as an example of this transformative shift, where Gandalf, now *Gandalf the White*, confronts Saruman and asserts his newfound power and wisdom over his former mentor (Chance, 2001, pg. 78-79). Since the beginning of the chapter, it is evident that Saruman is not aware of the switch in their authority. He immediately starts to talk in a condescending manner and in a superior position, amplified by his literal position in the heights of his tower: "Gandalf I know too well to have much hope that he seeks help or counsel here," (*LOTR*, pg. 578). In this statement, Saruman's overbearing pride is apparent, as he questions whether Gandalf would seek his assistance amid their strained relationship. Furthermore, he makes an indirect assumption of still being in a position of Gandalf's mentor. However, Gandalf's command

“Come back, Saruman... I did not give you a leave to go, I have not finished,” (*LOTR*, pg. 583) quickly reveals the new order in Istari’s hierarchy, as his words themselves are enough to make Saruman listen and obey, though unwillingly. As a final confirmation of Saruman’s demotion serves Gandalf’s revelation: “I am not Gandalf the Grey, whom you betrayed. I am Gandalf the White,” (*LOTR*, pg. 583).

Gandalf’s authority over Saruman is further asserted through his power to reprimand Saruman for his actions. At first, in a final attempt to get Saruman to repent, Gandalf tries to open Saruman’s eyes to his hopeless situation. Then he offers him to go and be free, but only if he willingly comes down from his tower and surrenders his staff along with his key to Orthanc. Chance suggests that Gandalf’s appeal to the wizard to come down represents a chance for Saruman to humble himself and admit his own misdeeds (2001, pg. 79). Gandalf even promises him that he may gain his staff back later if he makes amends and helps them in their task to defeat Sauron. Such a request enrages Saruman, thinking Gandalf longs for his power and seeks to overthrow other kingdoms of Middle-earth, because that is what he would have done in his place if he had a chance (Chance, 2001, pg. 51). In consequence, Saruman is cast out of their Order. Gandalf breaks his staff using words only, making Saruman almost powerless. This action is a final confirmation that the Valar had indeed chosen Gandalf to be the head of their order, since the broken staff may serve as a symbol of lost position, which can be witnessed again when Denethor’s staff is broken. Aside from Saruman’s removal from the Council, he is not reprimanded any further for his actions. Chance suggests that Gandalf does not wish to punish him, as he does not long for power and mastery and believes that Saruman will face the consequences of his actions, which is sufficient punishment (2001, pg. 79). Overall, Gandalf’s behavior reveals his emphasis on redemption and his hope that it can be achieved by all who try.

Additionally, the encounter by the Tower of Orthanc offers comparison of the two wizards regarding the influence they have on other characters. Saruman tries to gain Théoden’s favor by using his power of persuasion. He bends truth, uses flattery and appeals to their former alliance. However, his words are empty as they are not supported by his actions: “what he says and what he does are twin, dual” (Chance, 2001, pg. 77). Additionally, his words tend to awaken pride in his listeners (which he demonstrated after Isengard’s defeat), unlike Gandalf’s words which usually awaken hope and command selfless actions, illustrated for example in his discussion with Frodo regarding the importance of showing mercy to

Gollum. Once again, Gandalf stands in contrast to Saruman's behavior. As pointed out by Ruud, Gandalf argues against Saruman with simple truths, which he does not explain any further, as they are self-evident (2010, pg. 148).

At last, there are indications that Gandalf's influence on his fellow wizard may be reflected in Saruman's continuous interest in the Shire. This is supported by *Unfinished Tales*, which notes that Saruman has grown to fear Gandalf, as he suspected that Gandalf noticed his treacherous inner mind. That is why Saruman observes every single step Gandalf takes, while hiding his uncertainty behind treating Gandalf with condescendence every chance he gets. It is through this observation that Saruman "came to give thought to the Halflings and the Shire, which otherwise he would have deemed beneath his notice" (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 360). Therefore, Saruman started gathering information on Shire in secret, partly because he was suspicious of Gandalf and partly because it was a chance to extend his powers. Saruman's interest in the Shire and his liking of hobbit's leaf might be a piece of evidence suggesting that Saruman did imitate Gandalf in certain aspects of his behavior. Efficiency of imitation as a learning strategy implies that Gandalf's influence on Saruman's character was indeed significant (Center for Health Leadership & Practice, 2003, pg. 4).

A question emerges: Does Saruman invade the Shire because he wants to avenge Gandalf's involvement in his demise? Saruman is well aware of the affection Gandalf has had for Shire and its inhabitants, so he might have reached a conclusion that the invasion and destruction of Shire would break Gandalf's heart (Pecháček, Grygar, Kdo jsou Istari?, 2022). However, in the chapter "The Scouring of the Shire" Saruman explicitly states that he had conquered the Shire to get his revenge on hobbits, not on Gandalf. It is, however, possible that his bitterness against Gandalf played a peripheral role in those events. The *Unfinished Tales* support such a theory as it is mentioned that before the events of *the Lord of the Rings*, Saruman started corrupting more and more hobbits through his business with hobbits' tobacco, as „he liked to extend his power, especially into Gandalf's province“ (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 358). Gandalf was aware of Saruman's visits, deeming them harmless. In this instance, Gandalf's hopefulness and naivety might have contributed to Shire's defeat. However, the wizard managed to turn these circumstances into a learning opportunity for the group of hobbits, as he allowed them to deal with the situation on their own, encouraging them that "this is what you [the hobbits] have been trained for" (*LOTR*, pg. 966).

In conclusion, Saruman and Gandalf's relationship is very specific, as firstly it is Gandalf who allows Saruman to shape his mind and accepts his counsel. As their role switches during the narrative, suddenly it is Gandalf who is in superior position and attempts to guide Saruman out of his own treacherous way into repentance. However, Gandalf cannot force Saruman into understanding that he has succumbed to hopeless darkness, as Saruman cannot see reason through his own pride (Chance, 2001, pg. 108). Lastly, the wizards being of the same origin and carrying the same task in Middle-earth demonstrates comparison of Saruman's pride and Gandalf's humility in their role as guides to the Free Peoples.

2.3 Théoden

Théoden, the king of Rohan, appears in the story during the second book, *The Two Towers*. He and Gandalf have very peculiar relationship dynamics. Starting in a mutual rivalry, the two grow into deep mutual respect. In several instances, Théoden trusts Gandalf's guidance despite his own judgement, humbling himself to the position of order-taking man. However, even though Gandalf gains the king's trust soon after their reunion, Gandalf must choose a different approach in guiding and counseling Théoden, as he is older, prouder, and more respected figure than any other characters analyzed in this thesis, aside Saruman. Additionally, unlike his relationship with Aragorn or Frodo, Théoden and Gandalf are not bonded with years of friendship and shared memories. Hence, Gandalf's approach in this case is exceptionally unique and cautious. He has to maintain the notion of equality and mutual respect between them. If Gandalf behaved in the slightest condescending manner towards the king, it could result in the king's reluctance to have Gandalf as a guide or counsellor.

Théoden and Gandalf's relationship does not start on good terms due to the events taking place before Elrond's council. After escaping Orthanc, Gandalf arrives to Rohan. There he meets with Théoden, who is most likely already under the influence of Gríma Wormtongue and Saruman. Manipulated Théoden, desperate to get rid of Gandalf, offers to give him any horse in Rohan that he pleases. To the king's dismay, he opts for Shadowfax, the mightiest and most precious horse of them all – a horse, which only the Lord of the Mark may ride. This encounter leads to distrust from Théoden's side, causing a strained relationship between the two and consequently setting unfavorable conditions for their next encounter. The hostility of their quarrel spreads among the People of Rohan as well, as indicated by Éomer's revelation that people now call Gandalf "herald of strange events; bringer of evil" (*LOTR*, pg. 435).

The next time Gandalf and Théoden meet, it is in the Golden Hall of Meduseld, the royal hall of Edoras. Upon his arrival, Gandalf promptly begins to suspect the underlying issues at the court, along with something ill happening to the King of Rohan. Confronted with Rohan's uncommon hostility, he is cautious and declines to surrender his staff, claiming he needs it for support. The doorguard of Edoras, Háma, grants him a permission to retain his staff, believing that he comes with good intentions in his heart. One possible interpretation of this gesture is Háma's implicit desire to gain Gandalf's help, recognizing the unhealthy influence which the King's counselor has on their kingdom and the king himself (Chance, 2001, pg. 68). Thanks to Háma, Gandalf is provided an opportunity to guide Théoden out of his madness, thus potentially influence the fate of the whole Kingdom of Rohan.

When Gandalf arrives to the King's hall, Théoden is now only a shadow of his former glory. He supports himself with a staff, speaks with weak voice, and finds himself unable to decide without counseling first. The sudden decline in Théoden's health is attributed to various causes. Firstly, in Gandalf's absence, the king's mind was blinded and manipulated by Saruman's servant, Gríma Wormtongue. Secondly, Gríma has been whispering evil counsels to the old King, planting seeds of doubts and fear into his mind, making him believe that he is weak and frail. Consequently, he managed to convince Théoden that his kingdom is doomed to fail. Gríma's treachery extends further as he convinces Théoden that even his own kin, such as his son Théodred and his nephew Éomer, have ambitions to usurp his throne (Tolkien, 2009a, pg. 367). For these reasons, Théoden gave in to the fear planted in him by his evil counsellor and therefore gave up hope in his own power and in a potential victory of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth.

As suggested by Ruud, the outcome of the following battle of persuasion for Théoden's sanity performed by Gandalf and Saruman could decide the fate of both Gondor and Rohan (2010, pg. 144). Despite Théoden's initial refusal of Gandalf's authority, he swiftly subdues to the wizard's reasoning, breaking out from the influence of Gríma. Gandalf frees Théoden's will and heals his mind by revealing new power, which he gained after his own death and resurrection. Without Gandalf's sacrifice and resurrection, he would have never been able to save Théoden (1954, letter n. 156, to Robert Murray). However, according to Chance, it was not only Gandalf's sovereign power that delivered Théoden from madness, but it was his appeal to hope, to turn to light instead of the dark, and have courage (2001, pg. 70-71). The wizard also advises Théoden to conquer his self-pity and to reclaim his role as the

King of Rohan. Due to Gandalf's reminder of Théoden's power, the king is able to regain his former strength and glory, and face what is about to come. His deliverance from madness, performed by Gandalf, is a key moment in the development of their relationship. Additionally, as a token of the wizard and king's renewed friendship, Gandalf is officially gifted Shadowfax.

After these events, Théoden gradually develops a sense of trust in Gandalf, leaning on him for guidance and taking his counsel with increasing confidence. The first example of their growing trust is clear in the scene following Théoden's return. There, he claims to "do as you [Gandalf] ask," (*LOTR*, pg. 516) when he is advised to bring Éomer back to King's hall. However, the King still maintains his sovereignty by implying that he only obeys because it pleases him. Nevertheless, this dialogue sets a ground for later, when Théoden openly asks for Gandalf's opinion: "Now, Gandalf, you said that you had counsel to give, If I would hear it. What is your counsel?" (*LOTR*, pg. 518). Although the King is not willing to let his people go to war without him, as Gandalf advises, he does not hesitate to follow other counsels of his. He even takes his advice and shows mercy to his treacherous former advisor Gríma Wormtongue. Gandalf's emphasis on grace and mercy appears to be a repeating pattern throughout the whole narrative, as is explored in one of the previous subchapters dedicated to Frodo, and it applies to Théoden as well.

Another important moment that may serve as an example of Gandalf's role as a guide to Théoden occurs following the defeat of Isengard at the encounter with Saruman. There Gandalf subtly guides the king and makes certain decisions regarding his character growth. Théoden's desire to meet with Saruman, the man who has done him so much harm, is supported by Gandalf. It can be assumed that Gandalf wanted Théoden to face Saruman, so he could test his loyalty and help him regain his strength by facing the man responsible for his past failure (Chance, 2001, pg. 78). Upon their arrival to the tower of Orthanc, Saruman attempts to plant seeds of doubt into the king's mind or to fully turn him against Gandalf. During the scene, Gandalf chooses to warn and instruct his company in advance, and then stands by and watches. He silently observes as Saruman tries to sway Théoden and manipulate him into believing that they are still friends, and their alliance would be beneficial to both (Chisholm, 2019, pg. 93). This method is similar to a problem-solving method in which the teacher/mentor provides instructions before the activity and then lets the student tackle the problem on their own, consequently encouraging their independence and

confidence (Vanderbilt University, 2023). The independence of a mentee is a desired outcome of teaching and Gandalf's character exemplifies this approach as he often allows other characters to handle situations independently (Hjort, 2013, pg. 13-14).

While Théoden resists succumbing to Saruman's manipulation for a second time, he momentarily wavers in his trust towards Gandalf for a moment. After Saruman relinquishes his attempts to win Théoden's allegiance, he redirects his efforts towards Gandalf and attempts to sway him as well. Faced with his own uncertainties regarding Gandalf's loyalty, Théoden grapples with doubt. However, his doubt reveals the respect which he gained for Gandalf, as he speculates internally that: "He [Gandalf] will betray us; he will go – we shall be lost" (*LOTR*, pg. 582). In this moment of uncertainty, Théoden's faith in Gandalf is tested, yet it ultimately reaffirms the deep bond of trust and admiration he holds for the wizard.

Considering Saruman's betrayal of Théoden and its severe consequences for the king, a question present itself: Why was Théoden willing to trust another wizard the way he did trust Gandalf? Perhaps it was the clear contrast between Gandalf and Saruman. For example, in the Golden Hall of Meduseld, Gandalf urgently counsels Théoden, but he never manipulates him. Furthermore, during the encounter with Saruman by the tower of Orthanc, Gandalf does not interrupt the scene and gives Théoden space to resist Saruman's manipulation on his own (Sena, Vogel, 2023 pg. 138). Perhaps Gandalf realized how important it is for Théoden to overcome Saruman's temptations, allowing him to address and overcome his self-doubt about being previously overpowered by Saruman. Building healthy self-confidence is an important mentoring technique (Center for Health Leadership & Practice, 2003, pg. 11), which proves that Gandalf indeed had implicit mentoring impact on Théoden.

In conclusion, during Gandalf's and Théoden's interactions, Gandalf often used motivation as a tool to guide the king. Another one of his principles was keeping a notion of mutual respect and equality. Truth is yet another powerful ally of the wizard, as it allowed him to battle Théoden's doubts and fear. Gandalf also made sure that Théoden believes in himself and is aware of his own power and responsibility that comes along with it. The impact Gandalf has on King Théoden is significant enough to influence the political situation in Middle-earth and strengthen the chances of Free Peoples against Sauron.

2.4 Peregrin Took

Gandalf and Peregrin's (further referred to as 'Pippin') relationship distinguishes itself from other associations of the wizard in its peculiar nature. Gandalf and Pippin start to interact more only after Pippin picks up the Palantír after the destruction of Isengard. However, after these events Gandalf directs his attention towards the hobbit, making sure to always be aware of his whereabouts. He is aware of the hobbit's immaturity and treats him accordingly, guiding him towards adulthood and responsibility. This guidance develops into unique relationship deserving its own analysis.

Pippin's first major notion of character growth may be witnessed during his adventure with Merry in Fangorn. As they are separated from the rest of the group, including Gandalf, the hobbits must make independent choices and undergo significant character development. Eventually, this process paves their way to become door-wardens to Théoden and Denethor (Chance, 2001, pg. 76). In Fangorn, Gandalf briefly reveals himself to Merry and Pippin. However, he does not explain anything about his death and resurrection. Without satisfying hobbits' curiosity, he strolls to Treebeard, discusses his plans with him and then leaves again. Reasons for such behavior might include his limited awareness of the hobbits' situation. Furthermore, Dickerson suggests that Gandalf sometimes acts insensitively when he is occupied with larger concerns (2012, pg. 30-31). Alternatively, he might have respected their independence, leading him not to interrupt their adventure. However, another possible interpretation of Gandalf's actions might be a simple error of judgment on his part. By not satisfying Pippin's curiosity, Gandalf makes him look for answers elsewhere. This might have indirectly affected later events, when the ever-curious hobbit steals the Palantír from the wizard. His previous experience with Gandalf withholding information might have led him to believe that he has to obtain the desired knowledge himself by other means.

As already mentioned, Gandalf begins mentoring Pippin closely after the hobbit looks into the Palantír, through which he encounters Sauron himself. Gandalf at first reacts with anger and fear, as he is not sure what harm has been done to the young hobbit and to their cause. He questions him harshly and firmly. He even threatens that Sauron will want to torture him now, emphasizing the graveness of his actions. However, he is also immediately concerned about Pippin's well-being and begins to soften towards him as he is reassured that Pippin has not revealed any secrets. It is also implied that before this scene, Gandalf had suspected Pippin's growing curiosity about the Palantír, but he decided not to reveal more. His

reasons for such behavior are unclear. Chance suggests Gandalf might have been tempted to look into the Palantír himself, therefore he kept its nature a secret for a while. Had he looked, he would have most likely succumbed to the Dark Lord. However, in a course of action, he was saved by Pippin from such a fate (Chance, 2001, pg. 79-80). The second possible interpretation of Gandalf's secrecy is his suspicion that Pippin's curiosity cannot be satisfied, until he experiences Palantír on his own skin. In Gandalf's own words: "Burned hand teaches the best," (*LOTR*, pg. 599). This interaction might have served as a direct teaching moment between them. However, other Gandalf's words contradict that the wizard would risk Pippin revealing their plans to Sauron just to teach the hobbit a lesson, as he claims: "you would have told all that you know, to the ruin of us all" (*LOTR*, pg. 594).

Following these events, Gandalf and Pippin maintain close relationship, with Gandalf vigilantly watching over Pippin, knowing that by touching Palantír, Pippin has become an object of interest to Sauron. The wizard brings him along to Gondor, where they build mutual trust and Gandalf personally oversees Pippin's growth of independence. For example, when Pippin pledges himself to Denethor's servitude, Gandalf remains silent, allowing the hobbit to make an independent choice. Right after the scene, Pippin longs for Gandalf's approval, which he receives, along with instructions of what might await him in his servitude.

Furthermore, Gandalf sensitively guides Pippin through his worries and doubts without omitting the truth. When Gandalf and Pippin's discuss Frodo's fate, Pippin shares his hopelessness and asks Gandalf for his opinion. The wizard tells him directly that there was never much hope for Frodo to succeed. However, he makes sure to encourage the young hobbit as well. He tries to motivate Pippin while giving him a true account of the current situation. This approach might have helped Pippin to see things realistically, helping him to mature and to accept his own role in saving Middle-earth.

In the rest of the trilogy, Pippin starts stepping into new responsibilities without Gandalf's constant guidance. The beginning marks his servitude to Denethor, during which he uncovers the Steward's growing madness and stands up to him, consequently helping to save Faramir from being burned alive (Day, 1993, pg. 190). Throughout these events, Pippin reaches out to Gandalf for help, yet simultaneously tackles with the situation independently, determining the best course of action, demonstrating his growing independence. This is further illustrated in what could be called as a 'final test of Pippin's maturity' – The Scouring of the Shire. Here, Pippin (along with the rest of the hobbits) is challenged by Gandalf to deal

with the situation themselves: “this is what you’ve been trained for. [...] You are grown up now,” (*LOTR*, pg. 996). The passage itself implies that Gandalf has been training the hobbits for certain purpose: to be self-sufficient, independent, and mature. Pippin's actions serve as a testament to the wizard's successful influence on his life, as he organizes the hobbits and leads the resistance against the oppressive rule of Saruman and his henchmen.

Due to Gandalf’s guidance, Pippin gradually evolves into a strong character, as he plays a part in Isengard’s defeat, saves Faramir’s life, stands up to Denethor and slays a troll by the Black Gate of Mordor. Ultimately, he applies his newly gained qualities to help deliver the Shire out of Saruman’s hands, further proving that Gandalf’s influence during the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* lead him to maturity and responsibility.

Conclusion

Firstly, Gandalf's origin was discussed using various resources, such as Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales*, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* or *The Silmarillion*. Through them the thesis collected information regarding Gandalf's true identity, his hierarchical position in the world outside of Middle-earth, his companions of the Istari order, and details of his life prior to the events of *The Lord of the Rings*. But most importantly, the chapter considered Gandalf's task, and has concluded that its fulfillment was successfully accomplished.

The thesis aimed to address the objectives outlined in the introduction, as evidenced by the content of the individual chapters. The results presented prove that Gandalf's actions have indisputably influenced the trajectory of the narrative as a whole. Consequently, he fulfilled his task as an Emissary from the West, guiding the free people of Middle-earth in their fight against Sauron. Furthermore, it was proven that Gandalf was the only member of the Istari order to fulfill his task, whereas each of his companions faltered for various reasons. In relation to that, the author also contemplated whether his personality, values and ultimately his sacrifice have contributed to the fulfillment of his task. It was shown that Gandalf is capable of resisting the allure of evil, unlike the other wizards, by virtue of his wisdom, compassion, and humility, which resonate with the fundamental values embodied by Tolkien's protagonists. However, the thesis also demonstrated that Gandalf had possibly tortured Gollum, hence once straying away from his role as the "opposite of Sauron".

After determining the crucial specifics of Gandalf's task, it was possible to investigate his relationships to other characters, as presented in the second chapter. This analysis focused on Gandalf's deliberate influence on the lives of a few selected characters and his role as their guide, teacher, and mentor. It was established that Gandalf has often led other characters to independence, maturity, responsibility, mercy, and grace.

The second chapter also revealed that each character included in this thesis required a different mentorship approach from the wizard. Frodo intensively needs Gandalf's encouragement and advice at the beginning of the story, which ultimately empowers him to bear the Ring's burden on his own. In contrast there is Gandalf's rivalrous relationship with Saruman, marked by Gandalf's unsuccessful attempts to guide the fellow wizard out of his own treacherous ways. Then we have considered Gandalf in a role as Théoden's counselor, specific for its overcoming of difficult beginnings followed by a careful guidance which had

to keep a notion of mutual respect and equality. Lastly, we have dealt with Gandalf's influence on Peregrin Took, where he has led the immature and irresponsible hobbit towards adulthood and responsibility, consequently guiding him to play a part in Sauron's defeat.

The writing of the thesis was complicated by the scarcity of sources addressing the specific theme of Gandalf's role as a guide and mentor to other characters in the trilogy, particularly in relation to Théoden. However, this allowed the thesis to capture a refreshing point of view on the topic, as supported by analysis of various scenes in *The Lord of the Rings*. Nonetheless, the author makes no claim of their interpretation of the analyzed scenes being the only one possible.

Since it was proven that Gandalf functions as a teacher and mentor figure throughout the trilogy, one might consider him a potential role model for teachers seeking inspirational characters in literature. By remaining compassionate, wise, and thorough, he contributed to the character development of many, serving as a guiding light amidst the darkness of their trials. Through Gandalf's influence, readers are reminded of the transformative power of mentorship and the substantial impact it can have on individual growth and development, illustrating the profound role that teachers play in shaping the lives of their students. In this way, Gandalf embodies the archetype of the wise mentor, whose guidance transcends the pages of literature to highlight the potential for positive change in the real world.

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