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The Influence of Legends and Myths on J.R.R. Tolkien's Works

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Zpracovatelka na základě prostudování primární a sekundární literatury provede analýzu Tolkienovy prózy, především knih *Hobit* a *Pán Prstenů*, z hlediska motivů ze skandinávských a germánských legend a mýtů podle následující osnovy:

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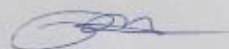
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I, Jitka Černochová, declare that the present bachelor paper and the work presented in it are my own.

I further declare that where I have consulted work of others, this is always clearly attributed. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the quotation is always marked and the source given. With the exception of such quotations, this essay is entirely my own work.

I understand that any attempt at plagiarism in this paper - violation of this declaration – may result in further disciplinary actions against me.

I understand that this declaration of authorship must be read, understood and signed in order for this paper to be accepted.

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PATRI ET AMICIS EIUS

Abstract

J.R.R. Tolkien is a writer whose imaginary world of the Middle-earth, depicted in his books *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*, has been admired by millions of readers. This paper focuses on sources of Tolkien's inspiration found in legends and myths.

To provide background for the study, the writer's life is briefly summarized to foreshadow his extraordinary talent and skills. In the following chapters, three different pieces of literature from three different time periods are considered from several perspectives and compared with Tolkien's works. The three pieces of literature are the Icelandic sagas *The Eddas*, the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, and the Finnish epic *Kalevala*.

Key words

J.R.R. Tolkien; *The Edda*; *Beowulf*; *Kalevala*; myths; influence; language; themes; characters

Anotace

J.R.R. Tolkien je spisovatelem, jehož imaginární svět Středozemě, vyličený v jeho knihách *Silmarillion*, *Hobit* a *Pán Prstenů*, obdivují milióny čtenářů. Tato práce se zaměřuje na zdroje Tolkienovy inspirace čerpající z legend a mýtů.

Abychom poskytli podklad pro tuto studii, spisovatelův život je stručně zmíněn pro nastínění jeho mimořádného talentu a schopností. V následujících kapitolách tři různá literární díla pocházející z různých období jsou posouzena z několika pohledů a porovnána s díly J.R.R. Tolkiena. Tato tři díla jsou islandské ságy nazvané *Eddy*, dále staroanglická báseň *Beowulf* a finský epos *Kalevala*.

Klíčová slova

J.R.R. Tolkien; *Edda*; *Beowulf*; *Kalevala*; mýty; vliv; jazyk; témata; postavy

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Introduction

J.R.R. Tolkien is a well-known and highly regarded writer of fantasy stories who enthralled and charmed millions of readers by his books describing the magical world of Middle-earth, the world where heroes, wizards, Elves, dwarfs, monsters, runes and broken swords take on the main roles. He loved legends and myths, and was absorbed by the languages used in those beautiful pieces of literature presenting links between present and past. Tolkien dedicated his life to the study of philology, which became both passion and obsession. In a letter to his son Christopher, he wrote:

All the same, I suddenly realized that I am a pure philologist. I like history, and I am moved by it, but its finest moments for me are those in which it throws light on words and names! (Carpenter, 2000, p. 264)

Tolkien was eager to create his own mythology for England, as his country lacked the complexity and depth and could not be compared with the mythologies of, for example, Scandinavia. This gradually became the impetus to enrich England in this respect and thus to fulfil his ambition. Step by step, he started to build the Middle-earth, and each piece became a part of an extraordinary work. Tolkien's works discussed in this paper include the book about the creation of the world called *The Silmarillion*, the story of *The Hobbit* and finally the completion piece in the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. All of them took years to be completed, partly because of the fact that Tolkien did not only write down the story but he also provided hundreds of pages with maps, family trees, alphabets of his invented languages, calendars and other additional information.

Did he rely only on his own imagination and allow it free reign or did he draw inspiration from other legends and myths? This question initiated the work on this paper with principal aim to analyze Tolkien's works mentioned above and compare them with three examples of legends and myths with the main focus on their common features. It is crucial to point out that because of the enormous complexity of the theme only the three examples were chosen from a huge number of legends and myths that could have possibly influenced Tolkien's work.

Tolkien's life is briefly mentioned to uncover the first contacts with foreign languages and mythologies. This creative urge was connected with his early life and brought him to such literary masterpieces as *Eddas*, *Kalevala*, and *Beowulf*. In the first

chapter, the Icelandic sagas called *Eddas* are mentioned as a splendid example of Norse mythology. The emphasis is put particularly on names, themes and characters, and all these aspects are compared to Tolkien's works to find out whether there are any parallels. In the second chapter, the Finnish epic *Kalevala* is analyzed from similar points of view with the same intention as *Eddas*. In the third chapter, the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* is scrutinized and again contrasted with Tolkien's work.

In the last chapter, the paper is concluded by a consideration of the discovered similarities to prove whether Tolkien used the legends and myths as the source of his inspiration for the forming of Middle-earth.

1. Tolkien's Life

Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892 in South Africa, though both of his parents came from England. He was very young when his father died and his mother took him and his brother back to Birmingham, England soon thereafter. When Tolkien was twelve years old, his mother also died, and he was subsequently raised by a Roman Catholic priest. The First World War interrupted his studies and at the age of twenty-three he entered the Lancashire Fusiliers, a British infantry regiment. In the following year (1916), he married Edith Bratt, who gave birth to their three sons and a daughter.

After earning his degree, Tolkien worked for two years as an assistant on the famous *Oxford English Dictionary* before beginning his career as an academic teacher. For some time, he worked as a Professor of the English Language in Leeds and then he established himself as a Professor of Anglo-Saxon in Pembroke, where he carried out his work for over twenty years. He became fascinated by languages to such an unusual degree that he even invented new ones, and began to develop and write about imaginary lands where these languages were spoken.

Tolkien published several critical works, including *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Chaucer as a Philologist*, and *Beowulf: the Monster and the Critics*, and soon earned a reputation as a highly regarded English philologist. These literary and philological studies were followed by quite a different style of writing, and in 1937 Tolkien published a book for children called *The Hobbit*. He enjoyed amusing his children by telling them the stories of the imaginary world he had invented. The entire made-up world of Middle-earth, as he called it, and its landscapes, languages, heroes and their histories, occupied his attention more and more. The book was successful not only in England but also in the United States of America, where it won the *Herald Tribune* prize for the best children's book of the year. He left Pembroke in 1945 and assumed the position of Professor of the English Language and Literature at Oxford, where he remained until retirement in 1959. The writing of *The Hobbit* however had not exhausted his interest in Middle-earth, quite on the contrary. Soon after the publication of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien started working on another tale of his imaginary world, this time a more serious and adult story which was to occupy him for thirteen years - *The Lord of the Rings* (Carter, 2003, pp. 1-8).

Tolkien's friends among his Oxford colleagues, centred about C. S. Lewis, formed a group, calling themselves the Inklings. They gathered every Thursday evening to read to each other from their own works in progress and to discuss various pieces of literature, focusing at first on all the principal Icelandic sagas. They were the first critics of *The Lord of the Rings*. When the book was finally published, a wide range of different viewpoints appeared on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean including Edmund Wilson's comment in *The Nation* of 14 April 1956: "It is essentially a children's book - a children's book which has somehow got out of hand." On the other hand, *New Statement & Nation* expressed the opinion that "it is a story magnificently told, with every kind of colour, and movement, and greatness", and the New York *Herald Tribune* called the book "an extraordinary, a distinguished piece of work." Tolkien created a 1,300-page trilogy and provided 134 pages of appendices, including maps, lists of kings, genealogical charts, calendars, alphabets, linguistic notes, and a historical outline of his imaginary Middle-earth (Carter, 2003, xi - xv).

The Inklings were familiar with Tolkien's thirst for epic work of mythology, and the group encouraged him. However, C.S. Lewis commented this topic in a letter of 15 May 1959 and was persuaded that although the group had given their comments to Tolkien, it did not have any appreciable influence on the trilogy:

No one ever influenced Tolkien-you might as well try to influence a bandersnatch. We listened to his work, but could affect it only by encouragement. He has only two reactions to criticism: either he begins the whole work over again from the beginning or else takes no notice at all. (Carter, 2003, p. 11)

In 1959 Tolkien retired from Oxford to live quietly with his wife in a cottage in Headington where he continued writing both academic and fantasy works. He died in 1973, and his book about the origins of the Middle-earth, *The Silmarillion*, was posthumously published four years later (Carter, 2003, p. 15).

2. The Passion for Languages

Tolkien's fascination with foreign languages appeared early in his childhood when he was charmed by Welsh names on coal-trucks. He first tried to write a story about a dragon at the age of seven. As a teenager, young Tolkien created a new language called Nevbosh, which means "New nonsense". It was a mixture of English, French and Latin but it did not have an ordered system. His next attempt, Naffarin, was more organized, had its own phonology and grammar, and was heavily based on Spanish. Tolkien then encountered Gothic and even managed to create new Gothic words from pieces of old ones. However, he dropped Gothic when he discovered Finnish that was also obscure at that time. He soon became bored with Modern English and in a letter to his son Christopher, he even noted:

Col. Knox says 1/8 of the world's population speaks English, and that is the biggest language group. If true, damn shame – say I. May the curse of Babel strike all their tongues till they can only say „baa baa“. It would mean much the same. I think I shall have to refuse to speak anything but Old Mercian. (Carpenter, 2000, p. 65)

Later he studied Greek, German, Italian and Russian. For him, it was crucial not just to know the languages but understand why they were what they were. He started to look for the bones, the elements which were common to them (Carpenter, 1978, p. 42). Tolkien's focus on language was extremely intense, he often stopped writing a story to study the history of a word and he could not continue before he had found it, Colbert writes. Furthermore, Tolkien believed the sound of each invented language is irrevocably bound to the character of the people who use it. For instance, Elvish languages are based mainly on Finnish, Latin and Welsh which he found euphonic, melodious, and charming and which he thus felt fitted his warm feelings towards Elves (Colbert, 2002, pp. 85 – 86).

Although experts have never agreed on the precise number of languages Tolkien invented, the list undoubtedly includes: Quenya (High-elven), Sindarin (Grey-Elven), Westron (Common Speech), Khuzdul (Dwarvish), Black Speech (used in Mordor by Sauron and his followers), and Orkish (used by the Orcs). Other languages mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* are dialects of Westron, Dunlending (spoken by the humans of Dunland), Rohan (spoken by Rohirrim people), Wose (spoken by the wild race of The Woses), Telerin (a version of Elvish), and Entish (spoken by the Ents). Tolkien's need

to invent languages for characters in his books was an essential part of storytelling and he continued to do it, despite the fact that he knew it could perplex many readers (Colbert, 2002, p. 88).

Tolkien lamented the lack of legends, myths and folk tales, arising from England and this feeling intensified his powerful desire to himself create a mythology for his homeland:

Many children make up, or begin to make up, imaginary languages. I have been at it since I could write. But I have never stopped [...] But an equally basic passion of mine *ab initio* was for myth and for fairy-story, and above all for heroic legend on the brink of fairy-tale and history, of which there is far too little in the world (accessible to me) for my appetite [...] Also – and here I hope I shall not sound absurd – I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English. “But once upon a time I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story [...] which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. (Carpenter, 2000, pp. 143-144)

As Noel believes, Tolkien relied on his vast knowledge of ancient myths and legends in creating mythology for today, but the final creation is essentially English and some of his concepts have no counterparts in other cultures (1977, book cover). To thoroughly appreciate Tolkien’s works, it is crucial to have an understanding of mythology and its purposes. The main purposes of mythology are to glorify human history with supernatural events, to explore and explain the unknown, and to hallow tradition. First, historical myths enrich history with supernatural events and beings. Second, myths attempt to explain the unknown to bring order to a chaotic conception of the world and to answer questions which cannot otherwise be answered practically. Third, myths which hallow tradition describe the circumstances in which the traditions came about in order to assist perpetuating them. Tolkien was aware of these purposes and used them meaningfully. This helped him to create a coherent internal mythology for the epic of Middle-earth with significant depth which has a profound effect on the reader (Noel, 1977, p. 5). As Tolkien said “hardly a word in *The Lord of the Rings* from its 600,000 or more has been unconsidered, and every part has been rewritten for many times [...] The labour has been colossal; and it must stand or fall, practically as it is” (Carpenter, 2000, p. 160).

Tolkien's work is extremely cohesive and coherent, it depicts a period of more than six thousand years and the entire calendric system is described in depth. Four ages of the world are mentioned. The First Age ends with the overthrow of Morgoth, the Second Age is focused on the growing power of the Númenóreans in the West and of Sauron in the East. The age ends when the Last Alliance of Men and Elves defeats Sauron, and Isildur takes his ring. Both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* take place in the last century of the Third Age when the ring and Sauron are destroyed. The Fourth Age, the age of domination of Men, begins when the Guardians of the Elven Rings leave for the Undying Lands. Tolkien's aim was to depict the time that had passed before our history began leaving only vague memories (Noel, 1977, pp. 35-36).

Tolkien was focused not only on new languages, but on names, too. According to Colbert, he often created names from roots of old words which he found when studying languages. For example, the giant spider called *Shelob* refers to the Old English *lob* meaning "spider", so Tolkien used "she-lob" for a female spider. The name *Saruman* is derived from the Old English *searu*, meaning "tricky", "cunning" or "a man of craft" and the word was used to create a name for a wizard who deceived the free peoples to join Sauron and gain power. The name of the dragon *Smaug* in *The Hobbit* comes from the Germanic verb *smugan* meaning "to squeeze through a hole", and the Hobbits' hillside houses called *smials* were described as narrow long tunnels and they are probably connected with the Anglo – Saxon word *smael*, defined as "thin, narrow". Tolkien sometimes chose names from old texts, for instance *Woses*, the name of a wild tribe, is a reduced version of *wodwos*, the Old English term for legendary wild men of a forest. And the name *Frodo* comes from the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, the spelling is "Fródi" in Old Norse (Colbert, 2002, pp. 97-100).

Tolkien created many names by dint of his knowledge of history and geography, for example, the name of *Mark*, the land of the Riders of the Mark, comes from Mercia, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the area of Birmingham and Oxford. Moreover, *Samwise Gamgee's* last name originates in Dr Samuel Gamgee, the inventor of absorbent cotton wool used in medicine. Dr Gamgee lived in Birmingham shortly before Tolkien moved there as a child, and was a local hero. *Rohan* is a name of a famous wealthy French family involved in many political matters (Colbert, 2002, p. 101).

However, there is a new word created by Tolkien of an unknown the origin, and it is a "*hobbit*". Colbert believes that many readers were certain Tolkien had combined

“human” and “rabbit” as hobbits are small, have furry feet, and live underground, but these theories were far from the truth as the word came to Tolkien while he was daydreaming and wrote a sentence on a blank piece of paper: “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit”, which became the opening line of his novel (Tolkien, 1993, p. 3). For a professor of Old English, the word “hobbit” made sense in the sentence as the Old English words “*hol bytla*” refer to a “hole dweller”. This shows Tolkien’s extraordinarily deep knowledge of foreign and even dead languages, and suggests that all the names are in fact riddles coming from different sources (Colbert, 2002, p. 72).

Tolkien did not expect *The Hobbit* to be related to the entire mythology of *The Silmarillion* in any way. However, the elements of the myth gradually started to creep in and soon it became apparent that the journey of Bilbo Baggins and his companions was taking place in the part of Middle-earth, the history of which is chronicled in *The Silmarillion*. He was aware of the similarity between the creator and the creation. Once he wrote: “I am in fact a hobbit, in all but size” and “[...] I am immensely amused by hobbits as such” (Carpenter, 2000, p. 38). To emphasize the personal parallel, he called the hobbit’s house “Bag End”, the name local people called his aunt’s farm. But the hobbits owe their origins to more than just Tolkien’s personal parallels as he described them as “just rustic English people, made small in size because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination – not the small reach of their courage or latent power” (Shippey, 2001, p. 180).

Carter agrees that Tolkien’s childhood influenced his imagination of Middle-earth, that the Shire really has its roots in the English countryside and that Tolkien shaped rural England to his own literary purposes. He is convinced that the green hills and fields surrounding Birmingham in the 1890s and 1900s provided a framework for Tolkien’s vision of the Shire, which ensued from an interview conducted on 2 March 1966 for Saturday Evening Post, where Tolkien said:

My earliest memories are of Africa, but it was alien to me, and when I came home, therefore, I had for the countryside of England both the native feeling and the personal wonder of somebody who comes to it. I came to the English countryside of England when I was about 3 ½ or 4 – it seemed to me wonderful. If you really want to know what Middle-earth is based on, it’s my wonder and delight in the earth as it is, particularly the natural earth. (Carter, 2003, p. 2)

There is a question as to why Tolkien devoted so much time to create all of these names, even though some of them were not important to the story and they did not

move the plot forward. Shippey claims that Tolkien saw all the names as puzzles and enjoyed working on them as he desired Middle-earth to seem more real (Shippey, 2001, xvi). This opinion is also supported by Noel who says that Tolkien's works contain a word – play as a crucial element, which is obvious in his puns and riddles. He even occasionally used words for Middle-earth world which had a related meaning in an ancient tongue, resulting in a bilingual pun. For example, “*Mordor*” is Sindarin word for “Black Country” and the Old English word for “murder” or “mortal sin”.

3. Tolkien's Sources

As much as Tolkien loved foreign languages, he was impressed and strongly influenced by legends and myths in general. In a letter to his publisher, Stanley Unwin, of 4 March 1938, he committed to paper:

But I should have said that the story had for more intelligent reader a great number of philosophical and mythological implications that enormously enhanced without detracting from the surface "adventure". I found the blend of *vera historia* with *mythos* irresistible. (Carpenter, 2000, p. 32)

Although the sources used by Tolkien can be found in mythology, specific influences are sometimes difficult to trace. Occasionally the theme is so ubiquitous that a precise source cannot be determined, and often the ideas are so general that they do not seem to have come from a single source. Among the huge number of legends and myths studied, read, and admired by Tolkien, three sources stand out: the Icelandic *Eddas* (*The Elder Edda* and *The Younger Edda*), the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, and the Old Finnish *Kalevala*.

3.1 *Eddas*

The Elder Edda is a very ancient work of Norse literature consisting of thirty-five books, most in verse but some in prose; it is a collection of history, heroic legends, proverbs, religious myths, pure fables and cosmogony. It is the original source, "fountainhead", of Norse mythology. In the thirteenth century, *The Elder Edda* was retold by Snori Sturluson and called *The Younger Edda*, or *The Prose Edda*. Carter describes this work as "a stylistic masterpiece [...] which attempts to retell the Nordic myths, garnished with scraps of Old Testament legend and linked up uncertainly with the Trojan legend cycle", as for example, the Norse god Odin is introduced as the grandson of King Priam of Troy. It also includes one of the greatest stories - the legend of Sigurth the Dragon-Slayer (Carter, 2003, p. 131 - 134).

In Sturluson's version, the Dragon-Slayer Sigurth is actually called Sigurd and other characters appear under slightly different names. Later the *Volsungsaga* appeared, which was a new recreation in prose of *The Elder Edda* stories, and in this version Sigurd Fafnirbane inherits a reforged sword, called Gram, which had been made by the dwarf blacksmith, Regin. Sigurd kills the dragon Fafnir by piercing an unprotected spot

on its body and takes the huge treasure, however he prophetically refuses to trust Regin, who does indeed plan to betray him. He falls in love with the Valkyrie, Brynhild, and intends to marry her, but through a magic potion, he loses all memory of Brynhild and weds Gunnar's sister Gudrun and helps Gunnar to gain the Valkyrie, which finally brings doom down upon him and the others. The legend is introduced in the final version in the German national epic *Nibelungenlied*, mentioning the hero called Siegfried. According to Carter, Tolkien had borrowed a lot from the entire corpus of Norse mythology, particularly themes, names, and characters (Carter, 2003, pp. 131 - 135).

Regarding the themes, Carter claims that *The Elder Edda* is undoubtedly one of the major sources Tolkien employed in creating the story of Middle-earth. There are many parallels and the summary of the most important elements is as follows:

- A dragon guarding a treasure.
- Slaying of the dragon through an unprotected spot on its body.
- A talisman of invisibility which is connected with the treasure.
- A broken sword which is reforged.
- A magic golden ring giving its bearer great power but goes hand in hand with a deadly curse.
- A quarrel of two creatures for possession of the ring which results in murder of one of them.
- A wicked little creature that possessed the ring is maddened by it and is eventually killed because of it (Carter, 2003, p. 138).

To exemplify the connection, *The Eddas* must be compared with Tolkien's works. In *The Hobbit*, the dragon Smaug is slain through an unprotected spot in its chest, just like Fafnir, and Noel agrees that Tolkien allowed himself to be inspired by one of the most famous Teutonic stories about dragons, the tale of Fafnir in the *Volsungasaga* (Noel, 1977, p. 154).

The theme of broken and reforged swords also appears in the *Volsungasaga*. The swords usually break after the death of their owners and could only be reforged for the use of their successors who faced a challenging task. In the *Volsungasaga*, Odin broke Sigmund's sword and in obedience to Sigmund's last wish, the fragments of the sword,

like those of Narsil in *The Lord of the Rings*, were preserved. The sword was later reforged for Sigmund's son Sigurd to kill the dragon Fafnir. Noel 167 In *The Lord of the Rings*, the story of the broken sword which is reforged occurs when Aragorn revealed Narsil and the sword was made again receiving the new name, Andúril, "Flame of the West" (Carter, 2003, p. 139).

The Elder Edda describes "rings of gold" which are inevitably connected with doom. A dying dragon prophesies to Sigurth, his slayer: "And the rings thy bane shall be." Later in the story, Gudrun is mourning over the corpse of her husband Sigurth:

Gunnar, no joy
the gold shall give thee,
The rings shall soon
thy slayers be. (Bellows, 1923)

Carter is persuaded that this is the seed from which Tolkien's concept of a magical golden ring bringing bane to everyone who possesses it flowered. The curse of the ring does not only bring death, but innate moral decay and greed (2003, p. 133). What is more, the theme of the Ring being "a heavy burden" to its bearer may come from the story of an enchanted necklace called Brisingamen that a goddess received from the dwarfs and, just like the One Ring in Tolkien, the necklace is cursed and brings misfortune to its wearer:"Brisingamen is dragging me down [...] Brisingamen is fair, but I find it heavy" (Carter, 2003, p. 152). Frodo's struggle as the Ring-bearer is introduced uniformly: "It is such a weight to carry, such a weight"(Tolkien, 2001, p. 916) and "[...] the dreadful dragging weight of the accursed Ring". (Tolkien, 2001, p. 919)

Noel adds that a magic ring plays an important part not only in Tolkien's works but in myths in general. The well-known rings were, for example, those of Odin and Andvari. Each was a powerful ring belonging to a supernatural being. Noel claims that Andvari's ring is even closer to the Tolkien's Ring because of its malevolent nature, and that "Tolkien undoubtedly had Andvari's ring in mind when he created *The Lord of the Rings*". Both rings had the power to increase wealth; however they were cursed and brought corruption and tragedy to each of their bearers until they were destroyed in fire. Nevertheless, Noel maintains there is a difference between these two rings. While Sigurd's story shows the hopelessness of even the greatest heroes in fighting against fate (the curse of the ring fell upon Sigurd who was killed by his brothers-in-law), in

The Lord of the Rings the bearer must cope with burning temptation and ensure himself that the Ring can never be used for good (Noel, 1977, pp. 157 – 59).

The scene in which two little dwarves, Alberich and Mime, fight for the possession of the ring and one of them is murdered is also duplicated – as Gollum gained the Ring when his name still was Sméagol, after fighting and killing his brother Déagol. Carter emphasizes one more element in that of Wotan the All-Father, who although being the King of the Gods, feels irresistible lure of the ring, and this is repeated in *The Lord of the Rings* when Gandalf refuses to take up the burden of the Ring “because even he might be tempted to use it” (Carter, 2003, p. 139)

There is yet another aspect of The Elder Edda which carries great significance and further connects Tolkien’s books with Norse mythology, and it is a barrow, i.e. a burial mound. The barrow was believed to be a barrier between the real world and the “other” world, and that is why it was perceived as an ancient practice to go there to seek some advice or communicate with the dead. *The Elder Edda* depicts a typical example of this practice. The god Balder had dreams which portended his death and consequently Odin went to a barrow and conjured a seeress to come out and foretell the future (Carter, 2003, p. 170).

Tolkien developed both the burial and mythic tradition of barrows in *The Lord of the Rings*. Frodo’s adventure of the Barrow Downs is in accordance with such mythic tradition. The hobbits faced deadly spirits that inhabited the barrows, had dreams about being dead, and woke up dressed in the funeral robes. These barrows served mainly as a house of vengeful dead plotting to destroy the living. In contrast to the northern barrows, the burial mounds in Rohan were perceived with respect, not with horror, and enshrined the remains of famous kings (Noel, 1977, p. 173).

Carter points out that the only difference from the Siegfried story is that Tolkien combined the magic Ring and the Helmet of Invisibility into a single object. Otherwise, all the other elements coincide, and that Tolkien probably studied the Siegfried legend in all its major retellings mentioned above since the ideas used in his books are often peculiar only to one single version of the legend (Carter, 2003, p. 139).

Tolkien did not use only the motifs from *The Eddas* but exact names as well, especially for his Dwarves. The Dwarves names appear in the poem *Voluspo* which is a part of *The Elder Edda*:

10. There was Motsognir the mightiest made

	Of all the dwarfs, Many a likeness The dwarfs in the earth,	and <i>Durin</i> next; of men they made, as <i>Durin</i> said.
11.	Nyi and Nithri, Austri and Vestri, Nar and Nain, <i>Bifur</i> , <i>Bofur</i> , An and Onar,	Northri and Suthri, <i>Althjof</i> , <i>Dvalin</i> , Nipping, <i>Dain</i> , <i>Bombur</i> , Nori, Ai, <i>Mjothvitnir</i> .
12.	Vigg and <i>Gandalf</i> Thekk and <i>Thorin</i> , Nyr and Nyrath Regin and Rathsvith	Vindalf, Thrain, <i>Thror</i> , Vit and Lit, now have I told – the list aright.
13.	<i>Fili</i> , <i>Kili</i> , Heptifili, Frar, Hornbori, Aurvang, Jari,	<i>Fundin</i> , Nali, Hannar, Sviur, Fraeg, and Loni, Eikinskjalldi.
14.	The race of the dwarf's Down to Lofar The rocks they left, They sought a home	in <i>Dvalin</i> 's throng the list must I tell; and through wet lands in the fields of sand.
15.	There were Draupmir Hor, Haugspori, <i>Dori</i> , <i>Ori</i> , Skirfir, Virfir,	and <i>Dolghthrasir</i> , <i>Hlevang</i> , <i>Gloin</i> , Duf, Andvari, Skafith, Ai. (Carter, 2003, pp.
129-130)		

From these six verses, Tolkien borrowed the names for fourteen of his Dwarves and also the wizard Gandalf. The dwarf Thorin in *The Elder Edda* appears in Tolkien as Thorin Oakenshield, and the name of the dwarf Eikinskjalldi quoted above in Stanza 13 means “oaken-shield” in the Old Norse. This reflects how Tolkien combined names to create new ones and used his knowledge of languages in translation. *The Elder Edda* also served as the source of inspiration for place names. For example, the dark, enchanted forest Mirkwood is mentioned many times: “But when Muspell’s sons through Myrkwood ride, thou shalt weaponless wait, poor wretch” (Bellows, 1923). The notes in *The Edda* explain the term as “a dark, gloomy, magical forest”. (Carter, 2003, pp. 130-143) In *The Lord of the Rings*, the reader can find: “Their own accounts speak of the multiplying of Men in the land, and of a shadow that fell on the forest, so that it became darkened and its new name was Mirkwood” (Tolkien, 2001, p. 3).

Together with the names and themes, the influence of the characters from *The Elder Edda* is obvious, too. Tolkien used certain familiar concepts, such as elves, dwarves, dragons, and trolls; he did not invent them, but picked and reshaped them to his own purpose (Carter, 2003, p. 132). Noel can see conscious parallels between Tolkien’s works and the mythology. For example, Sauron, the main enemy of free

peoples of the world, reflects an evil god or angel and is feared by all of them. Noel assumes that there is a dualism between good and evil, and it can be found in the characters of, for instance, Loki and Hel, gods both associated with good and evil, and worshiped by mortals. They dwelled in a place where almost no one could or deserved to enter (Noel, 1977, p. 132).

What is more, Noel is persuaded that in the entire mythology, Sauron is the most similar to the Norse god Odin and that there is no doubt that Tolkien based his character of Sauron on Odin. There is one more parallel, although both Sauron and Odin were extremely powerful, they did not fight in a battle, they only watched from a distance. Sauron's realm was Mordor, "Black Country", and his servants included Orcs, demons, wraiths, and other creatures with supernatural powers. Sauron's servants Nazgûl resemble Odin's messengers, his trusted champions, the *einherjar*. The *einherjar* were described as men with helmets who had eagle beaks and bull horns. Like the Nine in *The Lord of the Rings*, they fought battles in Odin's place to determine the fate of mortal warriors. The *einherjar* were destined to lead the dead, who Odin gathered, for the final battle. In the same way, the Nazgûl led the Orcs and other evil peoples in Sauron's stead into the final battle of the Ring (Noel, 1977, pp. 134-140).

Colbert also considers Odin was a crucial inspiration for Tolkien when creating Sauron, however he offers more complex explanation and believes that Odin is a complicated figure, both good and evil, who can be compared both to Sauron and Gandalf. He reflects Sauron's dark side as he does not hesitate to kill if it suits his plans, he requires human sacrifices, he is often cruel, even barbaric and he loves treasures. Furthermore, he does not obey any law except his own ones, he decides when a hero must die and he cannot be trusted completely. He plays a part in the legend of the dwarf Andvari where he arranges the theft of the dwarf's ring (2002, pp. 120-122).

What is more, Odin has his own powerful ring which produces eight new golden rings every nine days and it gives him endless wealth and power. Odin buys loyalty and controls kings, just as Sauron would use the Ring to rule the leaders of the Elves, Dwarves and humans. Although Sauron has a physical body, he usually appears in the form of a frightening all-seeing eye. This theme is typical for many legends and that is because of the fact that Odin decided to drink from a magic well, which would give him immense worldly knowledge and make him the greatest of the Norse gods. However, he had to make a great sacrifice - to give up one of his eyes. Afterwards, he often appeared

as an old man with a single blazing eye (Colbert, 2002, pp. 124- 130) and his name in different languages included Bileyg, “One whose eye deceives him”, and Báleyg, “Flame-eyed” (Noel, 1977, p. 135).

Colbert adds that even to understand Gandalf, Odin needs to be taken into consideration and is an ideal analytical starting point. They looked alike - both are depicted as long-bearded old men, often walking with a stick, and mostly wandering alone on a quest that others cannot understand; they possessed supernatural powers, such as the ability to read the carved alphabet of runes; and they both could be very generous (2002, p. 53). They both rode a horse and even the horses were very alike. Odin’s horse Sleipnir, a tall, white, magical steed, looked like Gandalf’s horse Shadowfax. (Noel, 1977, p. 111) Tolkien even once mentioned that he thinks of Gandalf as of “the Odinic wanderer” (Carpenter, 2000, p. 119).

Aragorn, a character of *The Lord of the Rings*, is a particularly complex character and he typifies the myth-hero as he shares common points with such heroes as Sigurd. Traditionally, the hero’s mother is a royal virgin and his father a king; at birth an attempt is made to kill him, he is spirited away and raised by foster parents. Later he comes back to his kingdom and after a victory over a tyrant /monster/or a giant he becomes a king and marries a princess. In the end, he meets with a mysterious death, often on top of a hill, and his body is not buried. Aragorn’s mother was a descendant of the High Men and his father was a direct descendant of a kingly ancestral line. He was adopted by Elrond Halfelven because the Enemy was seeking to kill Aragorn as the heir of Isildur. Later, he fell in love with Elrond’s daughter Arwen. During the war of the Ring, he helped to overthrow Saruman and Sauron and alone challenged the Dark Lord, revealing himself as the Isildur’s heir. He married Arwen and became a king at the end of the war of the Ring. Finally, at the age of two hundred years he died on the hill of Minas Tirith and his body lay unburied for a long time (Noel, 1977, p. 68-71).

Another creature worth mentioning is Gollum. He is as sickening as an Orc and much more annoying, he has slick skin and webbed feet, and lives in a wet cave. Yet, for all the disgust, the reader cannot help pitying him as he is both slave and a victim of the Ring. He is corrupted almost as soon as he sees it. Norse mythology is once again the main source of Gollum’s life and split personality. Colbert says that in those old legends, there is a famous story of another small, greedy, cave-dwelling character with a special ring and desire for revenge. It appears in “The Story of Sigurd” that Tolkien

later described as one of his childhood favourites. In the story, there was Andvari King of the Dwarves, guardian of a magical ring of doom and the treasure produced by the ring, who lived in an underground cave. Andvari was caught by the god Loki who wanted the dwarf's treasure. Andvari relinquished his entire hoard except the ring which he tried to conceal. However, the ring was taken, too, so he cursed it to bring tragedy onto all his who held it. There is another similarity between Andvari and Gollum. Tolkien reminds us again and again in *The Lord of the Rings* that Gollum is hungry for fish. In the legend of Andvari, the dwarf lives in a cave with waterfall and a pond full of fish and he often uses magic to take the form of large fish to catch the smaller ones (Colbert, 2002, pp. 57 - 60). Noel is also sure that Gollum is the most comparable to the Dwarf Andvari who presents the combination of a small man and a water creature, which is quite comparable to a small, web-footed Gollum. What is more, they both lived a lonely and lightless life hoarding a precious but destructive secret (1977, p. 65).

In Norse mythology, Dwarfs were smiths and miners in mountains. They were ugly, dark and misshapen, not like the Elves, and their kings built magnificent underground chambers for themselves, quite comparable to Middle-earth's realm of Moria. Tolkien depicted Dwarfs as a noble nation, skilled in stone and metalwork; they were masters of strange powers and lived long lives. As already mentioned, most of the Dwarf names Tolkien used came from *The Prose Edda*. The word "*dwarf*" itself came from the Old English *Dwearg*. The standard plural for *Dwarf* is *Dwarfs*, however Tolkien was persuaded that as it had been a commonly used word, the plural would have been *dwarrows* or *dwerrows*. As a compromise, Tolkien chose the plural *Dwarves* for its parallel construction with the plural *Elves* (Noel, 1977, p. 125), and that is why Tolkien's Dwarves are in this paper spelled in a different way than the Dwarfs not coming from Middle-earth.

According to Noel, Tolkien's Elves most resemble the Light Elves of *The Eddas*. They both had supernatural powers, tall and beautiful figures, and the gifts of prophecy. Moreover, they were considered more divine than men, loved singing, and were long-lived (1977, pp. 113-114). Colbert agrees that Tolkien's vision of Elves was influenced by Norse mythology as well as the fight between Dwarfs and Elves. Dwarfs were often jealous of the Elves who loved light and generally appeared as fair and lovely beings. Tolkien went even farther and the conflict between these two races was

much more serious as Dwarves were allowed to live with one condition – they had to sleep under the ground while the Elves are alive (2002, pp. 26 – 30).

Other beings coming from *The Eddas* are the Ents. In Tolkien's works, these giants were guardians of the forest who were dangerous but not evil. "Ent" is an Old English word meaning "giant" and that in character they resemble the ancient fallen race of wise and faithful giants mentioned in *The Prose Edda*. They provide an ideal example of Tolkien's imaginative work as he started with the name, and vague mythic references to manlike and treelike guardian spirits of forests, and subsequently added character, a history, a language, and special powers (Noel, 1977, pp. 131-132).

3.2 *Kalevala*

The last piece of literature discussed in this paper is the Finnish epic called *Kalevala* (*Old Poems from Karelia telling the Ancient History of the Finnish People*). It is a collection of songs, poems, stories and magical charms from the Finnish-Karelian border zone. They were passed down by singers until being collected and written down in the 1830s by a folklorist Elias Lönnrot. After its publishing, *Kalevala* quickly attracted attention both domestically and abroad. In his lecture in 1845, German philologist Jakob Grimm considered that the oldest layer of material in the epic was mythical, while the heroic poetry represented a later development (Shippey, 2000, xv).

Tolkien's official biographer, Humphrey Carpenter, assumes that Tolkien's first encounter with *Kalevala* dates to 1911. The influence is quite clear as the Professor himself revealed his exquisite joy for *Kalevala* and the entire system of Finnish language:

Most important, perhaps, after Gothic was the discovery [...] of a Finnish grammar. It was like discovering a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind and flavour never tasted before. It quite intoxicated me; and I gave up the attempt to invent an 'unrecorded' Germanic language, and my 'own language' – or series of invented languages – became heavily Finnicized in phonetic pattern and structure[...] I mentioned Finnish, because that set the rocket off in story. I was immensely attracted by something in the air of the *Kalevala*, even in Kirby's poor translation...But the beginning of the legendarium, of which the Trilogy is part (the conclusion), was in an attempt to reorganize some of the *Kalevala*, especially the tale of Kullervo the hapless, into a form of my own. (Carpenter, 2000, pp. 214-215)

More than fifty years later, Tolkien was still fascinated and he stated in of the letters: “The Finnish *Kalevala* [...] remains a major matter in the legends of the First Age (which I hope to publish as *The Silmarillion*)” (Carpenter, 2000, p. 345).

Tolkien used *Kalevala* as a rich source, especially when writing his book *The Silmarillion*. As already pointed out, Elvish language is based on Finnish and that is why there are many names which echo in Tolkien’s works and sound similar to the ones mentioned in the Finnish epic. For example, a god who created the world in Tolkien’s *The Silmarillion* is called Ilúvatar. *Kalevala* begins with the story of Ilmatar, a spirit who shaped the earth.

According to Petty, the desired goal linking Tolkien and Lönnrot was to render a service to the literary heritage of their individual nations by providing historic continuity with the past through an epic that would serve as a mirror of the national soul, whether performed by Finnish rune singers or Elvish bards. They were both endless revisers, fearing that their works might prove overwhelming and never see the light of the day, and both finding themselves tortured by self-doubt regarding the worth of their efforts. While Tolkien struggled to complete *The Lord of the Rings*, he worked backward through the continually evolving *The Silmarillion*, trying to keep consistency within his steadily developing mythology. In a letter to his publisher Stanley Unwin, Tolkien wrote:

And the placing, size, style and contribution to the whole of all the features, incidents, and chapters has been laboriously pondered. I do not say this in recommendation. It is, I feel, only too likely that I am deluded, lost in a web of vain imaginings of not much value to others-in spite of the fact that a few readers have found it good, on the whole. (Carpenter, 2000, p. 160)

Similarly, Lönnrot's arrangement of the runes and the attempt to visualize the consistent storyline containing the many magic charms and runes consumed years of his life (Petty, 2004).

Concerning themes, Colbert believes that Tolkien adapted many stories from *Kalevala* for his own mythology; especially those of Sampo, and Kullervo. Firstly, the story of the magic object Sampo is reminiscent of the One Ring of *The Lord of the Rings*. In the Finnish epic, the blacksmith of the gods forged Sampo, a mill that grinds out endless amounts of grain, salt and money, leading to enormous wealth and power.

To forge Sampo was difficult even for the skilled blacksmith, who forged heavens, and it is comparable with the Sauron's effort (2002, p. 78).

During forging the mill, many great objects came out of the furnace, for example a magic crossbow, a magic ship, a magic boat, and a magic plough, however none of them was good enough so all the objects were put back into the fire. And then, after many attempts, the blacksmith's endeavour was finally rewarded. However, Sampo became a threat very soon as two regions started to fight over the ownership, and its effect - like that of the One Ring - led to moral corruption and cruel war (Colbert, 2002, p. 79).

There are strong and significant correlations, as Petty supposes, between the plots of *The Silmarillion* and *Kalevala* leading back to the story of Sampo:

- the inspiration to create an object of power;
- its forging by a smith/craftsman of a great skill;
- its theft by deception and spell casting;
- the fight to possess the object resulting in its breaking into several pieces;
- a curse on the heads of those who would steal the object parts;
- light/fire being swallowed by a creature;
- when the creature's belly is split open, the fire burns the hands of those who retrieve it;
- a great war fought to regain the objects from the dark places where they are hidden;
- departure of a sky-ship bearing the sage who offers hope of a new object.

In *The Silmarillion*, the reader perceives the creation of the Silmarils (three beautiful jewels made by the Elves) from the celestial light of the Two Trees. These are stolen through surprise and a spell of darkness and bound with fateful oath that brings doom on the heads of thief's lineage and all those who take possession of the jewels. The Silmarils burn hands when touched by a person with less than pure intent. Later, the separation of the three jewels ends in the march to overthrow a dark lord and regain the jewels. Finally, the hero is pictured in the heavens in a sky ship with the Silmaril on his brow. Petty adds that Tolkien used the inference rather

than direct borrowing from the legend of the Sampo, as the object itself was never defined by Lönnrot or his source singers in *Kalevala*, which leaves its use as an inspiration wide open (Petty, 2004).

Shippey also believes that the Tolkien's story of Silmarils (in *The Silmarillion*) is an attempt to solve the mysterious riddle of Sampo, which is depicted as an "undefined object often referred to" (2001, p. 244). However, these opinions are inconsistent with Colbert's vision of Sampo mentioned on the previous page.

Secondly, the story of Kullervo outlines that before he was born, his family had been exterminated, except for his mother who had been captured and had given birth to Kullervo. The enemy tried to kill the child, but all the attempts were unsuccessful so he was finally sent into slavery instead. Later, Kullervo finds his parents again, who are actually alive, even though his sister disappeared. During one of his travels, he meets her, but they do not recognise each other. He seduces her, and they make love. Afterwards, they inquire after each other's family, and they discover the truth. She throws herself in the river and Kullervo takes his own life by casting himself on his sword. The final scene of the story appears to have crucial contributory influence on creating the fate of a character in *The Silmarillion* named Túrin Turambar. Both Kullervo and Túrin are outlaws, accidentally falling in love with their sisters unknowing of the incest, which is followed by suicide of the sisters. The heroes seek revenge, but only with tragic results and both finally end their lives by speaking to their swords and asking for the death. Túrin asks his sword, Gurthang, if it is willing to take his life (Shippey, 2001, p. 251). In both tales, the sword agrees to drink its master's blood: "Yea, I will drink thy blood gladly, that so I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay thee swiftly" (Tolkien, 1977, p. 272). In *Kalevala*, Kullervo asks the same question and receives this answer:

Kullerwoinen, wicked wizard,	Thus his trusty sword makes answer,
Grasps the handle of his broadsword,	Well divining his intentions:
Asks the blade this simple question:	Why should I not drink thy life-blood,
"Tell me, O my blade of honor,	Blood of guilty Kullerwoinen,
Dost thou wish to drink my life-blood,	Since I feast upon the worthy,
Drink the blood of Kullerwoinen?	Drink the life-blood of the righteous.

(Crawford, 1888)

Not only swords but animals as well play an important part in the life of the characters. Sometimes the heroes would not even survive without help of an animal. For instance, Turin's cousin Tuor, another figure in *The Silmarillion*, shared some aspects of Kullervo. Both Kullervo and Tuor were made slaves as a result of war and they both escaped slavery with the aid of animals. In Tuor's case, the hounds sent to hunt him let him go out of friendship. As for Kullervo, he ordered bears and wolves to maul his cruel hostess to death. Another example is the symbol of transformation into a form of a seagull. In *Kalevala*, a younger sister of a god's wife is cursed and turned into a seagull after she had rejected the god. This reflects the fate of the character Elwing of *The Silmarillion* - when her realm was attacked, she cast herself into the sea and was transformed into a seagull (*The Influence of European Mythology on Tolkien's Middle Earth*, 2006).

DuBois and Mellor agree that the influence of *Kalevala* is the most obvious in Tolkien's last published work, *The Silmarillion*. In the beginning, Ilúvatar creates the world by conducting one of the greatest spirits in song. Melkor, the most beautiful of the spirits, tries to insert his own melody into the chorus. Three times Melkor interrupts the chorus and three times Ilúvatar must regain control of the song; those three interruptions represent the three wars in Middle-earth. The mystical power of a song in Tolkien's creation of myth is reminiscent of the role song plays in *Kalevala*. The conflict between Ilúvatar and Melkor has its origins in the singing match between characters in *Kalevala* (Dubois, Mellor, 2002).

The theme of a song is also apparent in the only creature in Middle-earth not fearing the Ring - Tom Bombadil. The Ring did not even have the power to make him invisible; but he could not defy Sauron permanently as his power was in the earth and Sauron "could torture and destroy the very hills". Shippey claims that he was Tolkien's first conception of a place being, the elves called him "the oldest and fatherless", and he was a cheerful, noisy, direct, and rather a simple nature – spirit. Everything he said was in a stress-timed metre: 7-beat lines broken into groups of 4 and 3 verses and he seemed like somebody who came from an age before art and nature had been distinguished, when magic did not need anything except the words alone. Shippey suggests that

Tolkien borrowed the idea from the singing wizards of the Finnish epic (Shippey, 2001, pp. 63-64).

On the contrary to the symbol of a song, silence also links *Kalevala* and the stories of the Middle-earth. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn followed the paths of the Dead, and called forth the dead to fulfil their oath. They did so and fought Sauron's allies and were finally released from their curse. As Noel believes, Tolkien's Dead were preternaturally silent, which follows the common tradition. Even when the dead returned to life they were often mute, such as in *Kalevala* where a slain hero could not speak even after his dismembered body was fitted together and he was restored to life. He eventually regained the ability to speak after being treated with a special divine salve (1977, p. 97).

3.3 *Beowulf*

There is another piece of literature which Tolkien used as a source of his inspiration, a poem of great significance to English literature; although it is entirely set in Scandinavia - the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, one of the few surviving examples of Old English. (Colbert, 2002, p. 20) It was composed probably in Northumbria at the end of the seventh century AD and is considered to be the first great work in British literature. The story is set in an age of war and most of the poem is devoted to the warrior Beowulf. He fights three creatures – at first a monster called Grendel, then its mother seeking revenge and finally, many years later, Beowulf faces a fire-breathing dragon that is furious after a golden cup was stolen from its hoard of treasure. The hero slays the dragon, but dies, too, after being fatally wounded in the fight. It is an adventure story filled with hideous trolls, enchanted swords, magic armour, bravery and dreadful monsters (Carter, 2003, p. 96).

Tolkien did not try to conceal its influence, in one of his letters he wrote: “*Beowulf* is among my most valued sources [...]” (Carpenter, 2000, p. 11), and later he added: “Yet it cannot, I think, be disputed, that *Beowulf* is more beautiful, that each line there is more significant than in other long Old English poems” (Tolkien, 1997, p. 14).

Tolkien was one of the world's experts on Old English, and as mentioned above, he lectured on the subject at Oxford University for many years. He also gave lectures

on Beowulf and he even wrote a critical review of it. Again, he was influenced in more aspects, especially concerning themes and characters.

Firstly, the coinciding themes include for example a dragon, Tolkien's favourite creature. He pointed out the importance of the dragon in a tale and added that these creatures were quite rare; in fact he could find only two in Norse literature – in *Volsungasaga* and *Beowulf*. However, he was not fully satisfied with either of them as he claimed that dragons were a fascinating product of imagination, but the one in Beowulf was not “frightfully good” and admitted that Fáfnir in the late Norse versions of Sigurd's story was better (Carpenter, 2000, p. 134).

As Noel believes, whenever a dragon appears in Tolkien's works, it follows the tradition of European myths. Smaug, in *The Hobbit*, can be quite compared to the dragon of *Beowulf*, which was a symbol of trickiness, covetousness, and dishonour. This is how Tolkien depicted Smaug:

There he lay, a vast red – golden dragon, fast asleep; a thrumming came from his jaws and nostrils, and wisps of smoke, but his fires were low in slumber. Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge coiled tail, and about him on all sides stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red – stained in the ruddy light...Above him the sleeping dragon lay, a dire menace even in his sleep [...] But the dragon did not wake – not yet – but shifted into other dreams of greed and violence, lying there in his stolen hall [...] (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 205 - 206)

Surprisingly, Tolkien completely avoided the theme of a dragon in *The Lord of the Rings*. Noel points out that it is because of the fact that the figure of a dragon became too stereotyped symbol to use, and dragons were always expected to be doomed to be slain, thus making it was inevitable that a hero would triumph over a beast, no matter how excitingly they were depicted. That is why Tolkien created new challenges and adversaries for *The Lord of the Rings* which were new to the reader, although they are themselves based on myth. Bilbo's confrontation with a dragon in the Lonely Mountain and the subsequent events of *The Hobbit* closely follow the story line in *Beowulf* (Noel, 1977, p. 156).

Noel compares *Beowulf* and *The Hobbit*, and finds many parallels as well. These include an undistinguished person creeping into the underground lair where a sleeping dragon guarded an ancient treasure. In spite of the fear, the person stole a precious jewelled cup, which was followed by dragon's immediate recognition of the missing

item from the treasury. The thief escaped unhurt but the raging dragon caused extensive damage and burned the surrounding land. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between the stories. Although Beowulf stabbed the dragon to death, the hero was fatally wounded with its venomous fangs, and eventually died (1977, p. 60).

While ancient myths often share an unfair tragic end, Tolkien had a sense of justice. It means the dragon deserved to be robbed as the dwarves were only attempting to regain their treasure and for that reason they deserved to escape, and Bard deserved to become Lord of Dale, not to follow Beowulf's fate who suffered an heroic death. Thorin Oakenshield, the hero who died, brought his fate upon himself. However, he acknowledged his mistakes on his deathbed and forgave Bilbo for acting against his will (Noel, 1977, p. 61).

Another parallel is a mead hall which burst with wealth and luxury. Tolkien's books feature Meduseld hall of the king Théoden in *The Lord of the Rings* and it is described with the same line as Heorot in *Beowulf*: "The light of it shines far over the land" (Tolkien, 2001, p. 496). Théoden's hall is shadowy, but pierced by sunbeams; it has a mosaic floor, painted pillars, woven cloths and colourful pictures on the walls, and it is doomed to be devoured by fire. All these features echo the hall of the king Hrothgar in *Beowulf* (Shippey, 2001, p. 99).

Noel finds other duplicated plot points in two supernatural weapons mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings*. They magically burned away after being created in the world of Wraiths and being used by mortals. One was the Morgul knife with which the Black Rider stabbed Frodo on Weathertop and the other was the barrow-blade with which Meriadoc attacked the Black Captain of Nazgûl. This follows the pattern in *Beowulf* where the sword blade, which the hero used to cut off the dead Grendel's head, dissolved in Grendel's hot blood, leaving only the golden, rune-covered hilt (1977, p. 164).

In general, it can be said that weapons in Tolkien's works are portrayed as highly valuable, abounding with descriptive names, supernatural qualities and mysterious origins, often made by Elves or Dwarves. Tolkien's swords (Sting, Glamdring, Orcrist) are comparable to Beowulf's Nagling which was forged by Völund the Smith, known as the Lord of the Elves (Noel, 1977, p. 163).

Shippey adds that there is another important influence of *Beowulf* in *The Hobbit*, and it is a strong sense that there is far more to be said about Middle-earth than has been. For example, when Bilbo comes back home, he has “many hardships and adventures [...] the Wild was still the Wild, and there were many other things in it those days beside goblins”, and the reader would like to know what they were. It leaves the impression that Middle-earth has many lives and many stories besides the ones mentioned (2001, p. 49).

Tolkien admitted that *The Lord of the Rings* is “a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously at first, but consciously in the revision” (Carpenter, 2000, p. 172). However, he cut out all references to anything connected with religion, cults or practises, in his imaginary world. The absence of religion in Middle-earth’s societies is unlikely to be found in any human societies, and in this sense Middle-earth could be called “Never-never Land”, where the characters are counted neither heathen nor Christian but rather something in between. This corresponds with *Beowulf*, and the parallel may indicate Tolkien’s underlying problem, or perhaps intention, and clarify this paradox of a “fundamentally Catholic” work which never mentions God (Noel, 1977, p. 179).

The theme of a subterranean descent represents a significant turning point of the story out of the sunlight world. It happens when the action of the story is moved from a natural world into “the deep places of the world” where extraordinary things happen. This theme is in Tolkien’s works accompanied by a deep sense of dread, by meeting a terrifying supernatural creature. In *The Hobbit*, it includes for instance entering a Troll’s cave, goblin-holes in the Misty Mountains, tunnel-like paths in Mirkwood, deep halls under the Lonely Mountain, and a dragon’s lair. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the long lightless journey through Moria is probably the most dramatic sequence especially when combined with the terrifying creature Balrog, and Gandalf’s fall; together with the final challenge taking place in the Chambers of Fire in Mount Doom in Mordor. Descents of this type represent important turning points in myths and they sometimes consist of a journey into the underworld to get some advice or rescue the dead. And according to Noel one of the most curious ones, with which Tolkien was aware of, is the descent by *Beowulf* into the lake of monsters to kill Grendel’s mother (Noel, 1977, p. 24).

Secondly, the characters and even some names were borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon poem. As mentioned above, Gandalf was often compared to the god Odin. Noel believes that when taken the story of Gandalf as whole, his mysterious advent and departure, there are parallels in the myths of Scandinavian kings from the sea. These kings were brought to a land on ships from obscure corners, often as foundling children. They became kings and their reigns were full of prosperity and welfare, but eventually they mysteriously return by ship to unknown destinations. Noel claims that the best known example of such a king is Scyld, a king of Denmark mentioned in *Beowulf*. He came as a foundling in a treasury ship and was sent away at his death in a beautiful and richly laden funeral ship after a peaceful reign. Gandalf's arrival by the sea from the West, and his voyage back to the Blessed Realm after over two thousand years are comparable to the journeys of the kings from the sea. His authority in Middle-earth was enormous, and although he was never a king himself, he helped to restore the kingdom and Middle-earth attained peace (1977, p. 112).

In *Beowulf*, the king Scyld's funeral is described as a ship – funeral. His body was laid in a ship, together with his armour, treasure and weapons. The water slowly pulled the ship away from the shore and carried it to an unknown destination. (Noel, 1977, p. 79). This is strongly reminiscent of Boromir's funeral in *The Lord of the Rings*:

Now they laid Boromir in the middle of the boat that was to bear him away. The grey hood and elven-cloak they folded and placed beneath his head. They combed his long dark hair and arrayed it upon his shoulders. The golden belt of Lórien gleamed about his waist. His helm they set beside him, and across his lap they laid the cloven horn and the hilts and shards of his sword; beneath his feet they put the swords of his enemies (Tolkien, 2001, pp. 406-407).

There is another burial which connects *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings* – Théoden's burial. The king was laid in a house of stone with his treasure, and a mound covered with turfs was built over him. Although there was no pyre, it is like the burial of Beowulf. Mourning songs were sung for both kings, and horsemen rode around the mounds singing the king's praise (Noel, 1977, p. 173).

Shippey supposes that the model for king Théoden and the Riders of the Mark is evidently taken from *Beowulf*, particularly the manifestations of behaviour, manners, and actions. The etiquette of arrival and reception of guests who wish to talk to a king

precisely corresponds to that of Beowulf. In the epic, Beowulf is, together with his company, escorted by a Danish coastguard, who makes his own decision and lets them pass, to the king's hall, saying: "A sharp shield – warrior must be able to decide, from words as well as from deeds." He leaves them there to report their arrival to the king, and then he comes back and invites them in, while asking to leave their weapons outside. Beowulf is greeted by the king, but shortly after he is insulted by the king's counsellor, who was sitting at the king's feet. All this happens in *The Lord of the Rings*, when Gandalf, Aragorn and the company ask to see the king Théoden. They are met by the door guards and forced to hand over their weapons. However, Gandalf is allowed to keep his stick, and Háma, the door attendant, lets them all in and says: "[...] in doubt a man of worth will trust in his own wisdom. I believe you are friends and folk of honour, who have no evil purpose. You may go in" (Shippey, 2001, pp. 94-95).

As they enter, they find the king sitting on a chair with Wormtongue, his counsellor, at his feet. Gandalf greets the king but is not warmly welcomed and later on the whole company is insulted by Wormtongue saying:

What aid have you ever brought, Stormcrow? And what aid do you bring now? It was aid from us that you sought last time that you were here [...] Do you bring men? Do you bring horses, swords, spears? That I would call aid, that is our present need. But who are these that follow at your tail? Three ragged wanderers in grey, and you yourself the most beggar – like of the four! (Tolkien, 2001, p. 502)

Even the hero Beowulf himself has a counterpart both in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Hobbit*, Bard had the task to slay the dragon, to take on the part of Beowulf. Tolkien chose an unknown hero, although of royal origin, who was eventually chosen as a ruler by his people. These Bard's features prefigure Aragorn, a grim ranger of royal blood who was wandering and treated with suspicion by most people. Even Bard's three gifts are integral to Aragorn's story – he was able to understand birds and beasts, he made several prophetic statements, and he possessed an ancestral weapon (Noel, 1977, p. 89). Shippey perceives Bard as a figure from the ancient world of heroes, mainly because of the inherited weapon which he talks to as if it could feel the importance of the moment and as if it also wanted vengeance: "Black arrow![...]I had you from my father and he from of old. If ever you came from the forges of the true king under the Mountain, go now and speed well!" And it is this arrow which killed the dragon in a way similar to Beowulf (2001, p. 39).

Another mythic influence in the story of the hobbits is the name Frodo itself. Noel claims it comes from Teutonic tradition and was probably derived from Frô, a form of the name of the Scandinavian fertility god, Frey. It means “wise” or “fruitful” and it appears in *Beowulf* in the form of Froda. Frodo and the legendary king Fródi of Denmark, another namesake of Frey, both increased the fertility of their lands. The year 1420, after which Frodo returned to the Shire, was a time of remarkable crops. In Denmark, the reign of Fródi was also a time of abundance (Noel, 1977, p. 60-611). What is more, Frodo is not the only example of a name borrowed from *Beowulf* as Tolkien’s Orcs come from *orc-neas*, a compound used for “demon-corpses” in the poem (Carter, 2003, p. 153).

There are many other names around Rohan and Gondor in *The Lord of the Rings*, such as Eorl, Earnil, and Earnur, which appear to be echoes of *Beowulf*. Carter says that as he researched more deeply he found that Tolkien had not always invented a new words or names, but he often used obsolete terms and according to its meaning in Anglo-Saxon he created a name, such as the name of the king Théoden - the word *theoden* was mentioned in *Beowulf* and referred to “chief of a tribe; ruler; prince; king” (Carter, 2003, p. 155).

Conclusion

J. R.R. Tolkien is an admired and accomplished writer who rose to fame mainly by dint of his fantasy stories. He was fascinated by languages, most of all by their development, and he even invented new ones. This further led to the creation of stories about imaginary worlds where these languages were spoken. Thus, it can be said that the passion for languages served as a basis of Tolkien's fantasy stories. This affection appeared early in his childhood and he first wrote a story at the age of seven. During his life, he encountered dozens of languages and found beauty in all of them. For example, he compared Finnish grammar to "a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind and flavour never tasted before" (Carpenter, 2000, p. 214). What is more, an inseparable part of Tolkien's life is presented by legends and myths as Tolkien cherished them in general. He was hungry to create own mythology for England as he considered the country to be quite poor in this respect (Carpenter, 2000, pp. 143-144).

The works discussed in this paper, *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, are set into the world called Middle-earth. As Noel believes, Tolkien when creating the mythology, relied on his deep knowledge of ancient legends and myths and followed the pattern acknowledging the main purposes of mythology - to glorify history, to explain the unknown, and to hallow tradition (1977, p. 5). Tolkien's work is quite cohesive and coherent, which is caused by the fact that focus was put not only on the plot and invention of new languages, but on names as well. According to Colbert, Tolkien often created names from roots of old words. What is more, he was inspired by his knowledge of history and geography, and by his childhood spent in the English countryside. Furthermore, Tolkien used various puns and riddles as a crucial element in his work (Colbert, 2002, pp. 97-101). This view is supported by Shippey claiming that Tolkien saw all the names as puzzles and enjoyed working on them so that the Middle-earth looked real (Shippey, 2001, xvi).

Among endless amount of legends and myths that were objects of Tolkien's attention, there are three extraordinary sources which stand out. These three sources are - the Icelandic sagas *Eddas*, the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, and the Finnish epic *Kalevala*.

The Eddas (The Younger Edda and The Elder Edda), an ancient work of Norse literature written down in the thirteenth century, is a collection of myths, proverbs, legends, and fables. It also contains the famous legend of Sigurth the Dragon-Slayer. Tolkien borrowed a lot from the entire corpus of Norse mythology, particularly themes, names, and characters (Carter, 2003, pp. 131 - 135).

Regarding the themes, the following parallels link Tolkien's works and the story of Sigurth: a dragon guarding treasure, eventually killed through an unprotected spot on its body; a magic golden ring connected with both great power and a curse; two creatures fighting for the ring; a talisman of invisibility; a broken sword which is reforged; the theme of a ring being heavy for its bearer; and a barrow, the place between the worlds entered when some advice or communication with the dead is needed. The advice is usually connected with future and the belief in predestined fate (Carter, 2003, p. 138).

Tolkien did not hesitate to use names from *The Eddas*. The most valuable source from this perspective is hidden in the poem *Voluspo*, in *The Elder Edda*, where most of the dwarf names together with the wizard name Gandalf originated. Other examples of name borrowing include the forest Mirkwood (Myrkwood) appearing in both mythologies as a dark, dangerous and enchanted place (Noel, 1977, p. 118).

The influence of the characters from *The Elder Edda* is undeniable, too. Tolkien chose certain basic concepts (elves, dwarves, dragons, and trolls) but reshaped them carefully for his own purpose. Noel assumes that the wizard Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings* is the most similar to the Norse god Odin (1977, pp. 134-140). Colbert agrees, however he offers more complex point of view and perceives Odin as a complicated figure, both good and evil, and thus resembling not only the wizard Sauron but Gandalf as well (2002, pp. 118 – 130). Another character of *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn, is a complex and typical representative of the myth-hero comparable to the hero of *The Younger Edda* – Sigurd. Their lives share the same features referring to their origin, childhood, fate, mysterious death, and burial (Noel, 1977, pp. 68-71).

The creature Gollum, a character of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, parallels the story of Andvari King of the Dwarves, coming from *The Younger Edda*. They are both guardians of the ring of doom, living in the underground, always hungry for fish, and after the ring is stolen, they curse it, while most of all they lust for revenge (Colbert, 2002, pp. 57 - 60). According to Noel, Tolkien also followed the tradition of

Norse mythology when reflecting the image of other creatures – the Elves and the dwarfs. While dwarfs were perceived as skilled miners and smiths living underground, Elves were beings more divine than men having supernatural powers, tall and beautiful figures, and the gift of prophecy (1977, pp. 113-14, 125). Tolkien even developed the conflict between these two races caused by jealousy (Colbert, 2002, pp. 26 – 30). What is more, the nation of ancient giant forest guardians, the Ents, was introduced in Tolkien's works resembling the ancient fallen race of wise giants mentioned in *The Younger Edda* (Noel, 1977, pp. 131-132).

The second source analyzed in the paper is the Finnish epic *Kalevala*. The book includes songs, poems, stories and magical charms collected and written down in the nineteenth century. Tolkien used this piece of literature as an abundant source of the inspiration, especially for his book *The Silmarillion* (Carpenter, 2000, p. 345). Since being amazed by Finnish, Tolkien based the Elvish language on it and that is why so many names echoing in Tolkien's works sound similar to the ones in *Kalevala*. The purpose of both writers to finish their work was the desire to create and protect the literary heritage of their nations, and they both had to exert enormous effort and face self-doubt (Petty, 2004).

Colbert believes that Tolkien adapted many themes, especially from the stories of Sampo, and Kullervo. The story of Sampo begins with forging of a magic object called Sampo, which was quite difficult even for the skilled blacksmith and corresponds with the Sauron's effort. The object soon became a threat as a fight started over the ownership, and its effect was very corruptive, like that of the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings* (2002, p. 78).

Petty finds many parallels between the world of Middle-earth and the story of Sampo, including struggle to create an object of power; its forging by a skilled smith/craftsman; its theft by deception and spell casting; the fight over the object resulting in its breaking into several pieces; a curse on the heads of those stealing the parts; light/fire being swallowed by a creature; after the creature's belly is split open, the fire burns the hands of all those who touch it; the effort to regain the objects, from the dark places where they are kept, which precipitated the country into war; and a sky-ship bearing a sage who raises hope of a new object. Tolkien used the inference instead of direct borrowing from the legend of Sampo as the object itself was never defined in *Kalevala* (Petty, 2004). Shippey also supports this point and adds that the Tolkien's

story of Silmarils (in *The Silmarillion*) is an attempt to solve the mysterious riddle of Sampo as an unidentified object (2001, p. 244). However, these opinions are not identical with Colbert's perception of Sampo as a magic mill (2002, p. 78).

The story of Kullervo crucially influenced the fate of a character in *The Silmarillion* named Túrin Turambar. Both Kullervo and Túrin present outlaws, accidentally falling in love with their sisters and committing incest. Suicide of the sisters makes the heroes seek revenge, but finally they both end their lives by speaking to their swords and asking for death. In both cases, the sword agrees to drink its master's blood (Shippey, 2001, p. 251).

Furthermore, animals often play an important part in the stories and affect the life of the characters. This can be seen for example when bears and wolves beat Kullervo's cruel hostess to death, or character Elwing of *The Silmarillion* is transformed into a seagull after her realm was attacked and she cast herself into the sea (*The Influence of European Mythology on Tolkien's Middle Earth*, 2006).

DuBois and Mellor believe that the mystical power of a song found in *The Silmarillion* is reminiscent of the role song plays in *Kalevala*. The conflict between a god and a spirit concerning melody in *The Silmarillion* has its origins in the singing match between characters in *Kalevala*. What is more, a song and a verse are essential for one of the characters in Middle-earth - Tom Bombadil – who “sings” everything in a stress-timed metre. Shippey claims that Tolkien borrowed the idea from the singing wizards appearing in the Finnish epic (Dubois, Mellor, 2002).

As much as the song, the symbol of silence creates another link between the works. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Dead are called to fulfil their oath and fight the common enemy. Tolkien's Dead are preternaturally silent, which follows the pattern of *Kalevala* where even if the dead are returned to life they are mute (Noel, 1977, p.97).

The last source discussed in the paper is *Beowulf*, the Anglo-Saxon poem of great significance to English literature, composed in the seventh century. The main story line depicts life of the warrior Beowulf fighting three monsters. Tolkien was one of the world's experts on Old English, he even wrote a critical review of the poem, and according to Tolkien's own words *Beowulf* was among his most valued sources (Carpenter, 2000, p.31). Tolkien drew the inspiration predominantly from the themes and characters appearing in the poem.

As for the themes, Tolkien emphasized the rarity and importance of a dragon, his favourite creature, in a tale. The dragon Smaug, in *The Hobbit*, is comparable to the dragon in *Beowulf*. Both stories include the theme of a person creeping into an underground lair, where a dragon guards an ancient treasure, and stealing a precious jewelled cup, followed by dragon's immediate recognition. As a consequence, the dragon causes extensive damage. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between the stories. Beowulf dies after being fatally wounded, which represents an unfair tragic end common for ancient legends and myths. But Tolkien had a sense of justice and that is why the hero of *The Hobbit* killing the dragon does not die and thus avoids Beowulf's fate (Noel, 1977, pp. 60-61).

Another parallel between the works is found in a presentation of a mead hall where warriors meet to drink and feast. Meduseld hall of the king Théoden regales the warriors in *The Lord of the Rings* and reflects the hall Heorot in *Beowulf*. Both mead halls, sharing the same function and description, are introduced with the identical line (Shippey, 2001, p. 99).

Weapons in Tolkien's works are portrayed as highly valuable and enriched with descriptive names, supernatural qualities and mysterious origins (often made by Dwarves or Elves). Tolkien's swords, Sting, Glamdring, Orcrist, are comparable to Beowulf's Nagling which was forged by the Lord of the Elves. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Noel discovers a duplicate plot point in using supernatural weapons that magically burned away after being used by mortals, although forged in another world. This theme parallels with Beowulf's sword dissolving in the dragon's hot blood leaving only the hilt (1977, pp. 63-64).

Both Tolkien's books and the Anglo-Saxon poem are full of action and the reader experiences endless plot twists contributing to the pure enjoyment of the works. In addition to that, there is a strong sense that there is far more to be said about the outside world than has been (Shippey, 2001, p. 49). On the other hand, Tolkien tried to simplify the question of religion not to confuse the reader and that is why all references connected with religion are cut out. In the end, the characters are neither heathen nor Christian. The same approach is applied in *Beowulf* (Noel, 1977, p. 179).

The last matching theme is that of a subterranean descent. It refers to dark (often dreadful) places of the world where the story is moved. *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* offer various examples, such as entering a Troll's cave, goblin-holes, deep halls

under the Lonely Mountain, a dragon's lair, and lightless tunnels through Moria. Tolkien was familiar with the symbol of descent from *Beowulf* where the hero enters the lake of monsters to kill Grendel's mother (Noel, 1977, p. 24).

The characters in Tolkien's books also have their counterparts in *Beowulf*. According to Noel, the wizard Gandalf parallels with the myths of Scandinavian kings from the sea and resembles a king of Denmark, Scyld, mentioned in the poem. Scyld's funeral is described as a ship-funeral and is strongly reminiscent of Boromir's funeral in *The Lord of the Rings*. Both bodies were laid in a ship, together with the armour, treasure and weapons, and carried away to unknown destination. Even Beowulf's burial is thoroughly reflected in king Théoden's burial, the only difference is a pyre built for Beowulf missing in *The Lord of the Rings* (1977, p. 173). Shippey adds that the model for king Théoden and the Riders of the Mark is taken from *Beowulf*, particularly their behaviour, manners, and actions (2001, pp. 94-95).

Even the hero Beowulf himself has a counterpart both in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Hobbit*, Noel compares Beowulf to the character Bard, an unknown hero of royal origin, who had the task to slay the dragon, and possessed an inherited weapon of great significance. These Bard's features recall Aragorn, the hero of *The Lord of the Rings* (1977, p. 89). And finally, the character Frodo of *The Lord of the Rings* is indebted to *Beowulf* for his name as it appears in the poem in the form of Froda (Carter, 2003, p. 155).

As a result of the analysis and comparison of Tolkien's works with *Eddas*, *Kalevala* and *Beowulf*, it can be stated that Tolkien was deeply influenced by the legends and myths in many aspects, particularly themes, characters, and names. However, it is not possible to say that he blindly copied what he had discovered in the books. He used the legends and myths purely as a source of his inspiration and adjusted it for his own purposes to fulfil his desire to create new mythology.

Resumé

J. R.R. Tolkien je obdivovaným a uznávaným spisovatelem, který se proslavil především díky svým příběhům ze světa fantazie. Byl fascinován jazyky, především jejich vývojem, a dokonce vynalezl i své vlastní. To dále vedlo k napsání příběhů, v nichž tyto jazyky ožily. Proto by se dalo říci, že vášně pro jazyky stála na prahu Tolkienových příběhů. Tento zájem je spojen s jeho dětstvím, první příběh napsal ve věku sedmi let. Během svého života se setkal s desítkami jazyků a objevil krásu v každém z nich. Například finskou gramatiku přirovnal k “vinnému sklípku plnému lahví lahodného vína, jehož druh a chuť nikdy předtím nepoznal” (Carpenter, 200, s. 214).

Krom toho, mýty a legendy, které tolik miloval, se staly neodlučitelnou součástí jeho života. Byl dychtivý stvořit mytologii pro Anglii, jelikož v tomto ohledu považoval svou zemi za zcela chudou (Carpenter, 2000, s. 143-144). Díla, na která se tato práce zaměřuje – *Silmarillion*, *Hobit*, *Pán Prstenů* – jsou zasazena do světa nazvaného Středozemě. Jak tvrdí Noel(ová), Tolkien, když vytvářel tuto mytologii, spoléhal na svou hlubokou znalost starodávných legend a mýtů a používal model uznávající hlavní účely mytologie – velebit historii, vysvětlit neznámé a uctívat tradici, (1977, p. 5).

Tolkienova tvorba je velmi koherentní, což je způsobeno faktem, že se spisovatel nezaměřil pouze na zápletku a tvorbu nových jazyků, ale také na jména. Colbert se domnívá, že Tolkien často vytvářel jména z kořenů starých slov. A co více, byl inspirován i svou znalostí historie a zeměpisu, stejně tak jako dětstvím stráveným na anglickém venkově. Tolkien též používal různé slovní hříčky jako základní kámen ve svých dílech (Colbert, 2002, s. 97-101). Shippey také sdílí tento názor a tvrdí, že Tolkien vnímal všechna jména jako hádanky a vyžíval se v jejich tvoření tak, aby jeho imaginární svět Středozemě vypadal skutečně (Shippey, 2001, xvi).

Mezi nespočetným množstvím legend a mýtů, které se staly předmětem Tolkienova zájmu, tři pozoruhodné zdroje vyčnívají. Tyto tři zdroje jsou – islandské ságy *Eddy*, finský epos *Kalevala* a staroanglická báseň *Beowulf*.

Eddy je souhrnný název pro *Starší Eddu*, která je starodávným výtvozem severské literatury z rukou neznámého autora, a její pozdější upravená verze *Mladší*

Edda pocházející ze třináctého století. Obě jsou sbírkou mýtů, přísloví, legend a bajek a mimo jiné zmiňují slavnou legendu o Sigurthovi Drakobijci. Podle Cartera si Tolkien z celé severské mytologie vypůjčil převážně motivy, jména a postavy (2003, s. 131 - 135).

Co se týče motivů, následující podobnosti spojují Tolkienovu tvorbu a legendu o Sigurthovi: drak střežící poklad, který je nakonec zabit díky nechráněnému bodu na svém těle; kouzelný zlatý prsten spojený jak s obrovskou mocí, tak kletbou; dva tvorové bojující o prsten, jeden z nich je zavražděn a druhý, ačkoliv se zmocní prstenu, je kvůli němu nakonec zabit; talisman neviditelnosti; zlomený meč, který je znovu skut; symbol prstenu jako těžkého břemena; a mohyla představující místo mezi světy, které je navštíveno pro získání rady nebo komunikaci s mrtvými (Carter, 2003, s. 138).

Tolkien neváhal použít jména zmíněná v *Eddách* a za nejceněnější zdroj považoval báseň *Voluspo* (ve *Starší Eddě*), odkud pochází většina trpasličích jmen a také jméno čaroděje Gandalfa. Dalším příkladem je les Mirkwood (Myrkwood), který se objevuje v obou mytologiích jako temný, nebezpečný a začarovaný les (Noel(ová), 1977, s. 118).

Také vliv literárních postav ze *Starší Eddy* je nepopiratelný. Tolkien si vybral určité základní koncepty, jako například elfy, trpaslíky, draky a trolly, ale pozměnil je pro své vlastní účely. Noel(ová) se domnívá, že čaroděj Sauron z *Pána Prstenů* se velmi podobá severskému bohu Odinovi (1977, s. 134-140).

S tím Colbert souhlasí, ale nabízí komplexnější pohled a Odina vnímá jako složitou postavu, mající kladné i stinné stránky, a tím připomíná jak čaroděje Saurona, tak Gandalfa (2002, s. 118-130). Další postava v *Pánovi Prstenů*, Aragorn, je typickým a komplexním představitelem hrdiny srovnatelného se Sigurdem, objevujícím se v *Mladší Eddě*. Jejich životy sdílejí stejné znaky týkající se jejich původu, dětství, osudu, záhadné smrti a pohřbu (Noel(ová), 1977, s. 68-71).

Další podobnost lze nalézt ve stvoření jménem Gollum, který hraje důležitou roli jak v *Pánovi Prstenů*, tak v *Hobitovi*, a podobá se králi trpaslíků Andvarimu z *Mladší Eddy*. Oba střeží prsteny, žijí v podzemí, prahnou po rybím mase, a potom, co je jejich prsten ukraden, netouží po ničem víc, než po pomstě (Colbert, 2002, s. 57-60). Noel(ová) dodává, že Tolkien čerpal ze severské mytologie i při zobrazení dalších obyvatelů Středozemě – elfů a trpaslíků. Zatímco trpaslíci byli vnímáni jako horníci a kováři žijící pod povrchem země, elfové jako božská stvoření mající nadpřirozené síly,

krásné vysoké postavy a dar proroctví (1977, s. 113-14, 125). Tolkien dokonce rozvedl konflikt mezi těmito dvěma rasami, způsobený žárlivostí (Colbert, 2002, s. 26 – 30).

Tolkien také představil národ starodávných obřích strážců lesa – Entů, kteří nápadně připomínají padlý národ moudrých obrů vyskytující se v *Mladší Eddě* (Noel(ová), 1977, s. 131-132).

Druhým analyzovaným zdrojem je finský epos *Kalevala* sepsaný v devatenáctém století, který obsahuje písně, básně, příběhy a kouzelná zaříkadla. Tolkien použil toto dílo jako bohatý zdroj inspirace, zejména pro svou knihu *Silmarillion* (Carpenter, 2000, s. 345). Jelikož byl Tolkien okouzlen finštinou, použil ji jako základ pro elfštinu, a proto tolik jmen v jeho knihách zní podobně jako ta v *Kalevale*. Podnětem obou autorů k dokončení jejich děl byla touha vytvořit a ochránit literární dědictví svých národů a oba museli vynaložit obrovské úsilí a čelit sebepochybnostem (Petty, 2004).

Colbert se domnívá, že Tolkien převzal mnoho témat, především z příběhů o Sampo a Kullervo. Příběh o kouzelném předmětu Sampo začíná jejím stvořením, které bylo velmi složité, dokonce i pro dovedného kováře, a shoduje se se Sauronovou námahou. Sampo se brzy stane hrozbou a důvodem k rozpoutání války, jeho vliv je stejný jako vliv Jednoho prstenu v *Pánu Prstenů* (2002, s. 78).

Petty nachází mnoho paralel mezi světem Středozemě a příběhem o Sampo, například úsilí vynaložené při vytváření předmětu moci; jeho vykování zkušeným kovářem/mistrem; následnou krádež předmětu pomocí podvodu a zaklínadla; boj o předmět končící jeho rozbitím na několik kusů; kletba na hlavy těch, kteří by kusy ukradli; stvoření, které spolkne světlo/oheň, a poté co je jeho břicho rozříznuto, jsou ruce těch, kteří se ho snažili dotknout, popáleny; snaha znovu získat předměty z temných míst, kde jsou držena, což uvrhne zemi do války; a nebeská loď odvážející mudrce, který dává naději nového předmětu.

Tolkien využil spíše odvození než přímé vypůjčení tématu z této legendy, protože předmět sám o sobě nikdy nebyl v *Kalevale* specifikován (Petty, 2004). Shippey je téhož názoru a dodává, že Tolkienův příběh o klenotech v knize *Silmarillion* je pokusem osvětlit záhadnou hádanku neidentifikovaného předmětu Sampo (2001, s. 244). Avšak to se neshoduje s názorem Colberta, který vnímá Sampo jako kouzelný mlýnek (2002, s. 78).

Příběh o hrdinovi jménem Kullervo v základech ovlivnil příběh postavy Túrina Turambara v knize *Silmarillion*. Jak Kullervo, tak Túrin představovali vyhnance, kteří se nevědomky zamilují do svých sester a dopustí se incestu. Sebevražda sester přinutí hrdiny pátrat po pomstě, ale nakonec oba ukončují své životy, poté co promlouvají ke svým mečům a žádají o smrt. V obou případech meč souhlasí s uhašením žízně krví svého pána (Shippey, 2001, s. 251).

Další důležitou roli často hrají zvířata, která ovlivňují životy postav. To se ukazuje, například když medvědi a vlci utlučou k smrti Kullervovu krutou hostitelku nebo postava Elwing ze *Silmarillionu* je proměněna v racka poté, co je její říše napadena a ona se vrhá do moře (*The Influence of European Mythology on Tolkien's Middle Earth*, 2006).

DuBois a Mellor věří, že mystická síla písně v Tolkienově *Silmarillionu* připomíná roli písně v *Kalevala* (Dubois, Mellor, 2002). A co více, kombinace písně a verše jsou neodmyslitelnou součástí života jednoho tvora Středozemě a tím je Tom Bombadil, který vše říká ve verších. Shippey tvrdí, že Tolkien si vypůjčil tento nápad od zpívajících čarodějů z finského eposu (2001, s. 63-64).

Stejně tak jako píseň, symbol ticha představuje spojení mezi díly. V *Pánovi Prstenů* jsou mrtví vyzváni, aby splnili svou přísahu a bojovali proti nepříteli. Mlčky uposlechnou, což následuje vzor z *Kalevaly*, kde mrtví, dokonce i když jsou znovu oživeni, zůstávají němí (Noel(ová), 1977, s. 97).

Posledním zdrojem, kterým se práce zabývá, je staroanglická velevýznamná báseň *Beowulf*, složená v sedmém století. Hlavní děj líčí život bojovníka Beowulfa a jeho boj se třemi příšerami. Tolkien byl jedním ze světových odborníků na anglosaskou angličtinu, dokonce napsal kritiku na tuto báseň a sám *Beowulfa* označil za „jeden z jeho nejceněnějších zdrojů“ (Carpenter, 2000, s. 31). Tolkien čerpal inspiraci především z motivů a postav objevujících se v básni.

Co se týče motivů, Tolkien zdůrazňoval důležitost draka, jeho oblíbeného tvora, v příběhu a jeho vzácnost. Drak Smaug v *Hobitovi* je srovnatelný s drakem v *Beowulfovi*. Oba příběhy obsahují téma postavy plížící se do podzemního doupěte, kde drak střeží starodávný poklad. Poté co ukradne cenný pohár, zmizí, ale drak ztrátu okamžitě zjistí. Následkem je drakovo běsnění, při kterém jsou způsobeny velké škody. Na druhou stranu je zde významný rozdíl. Beowulf je smrtelně raněn a umírá, čímž následuje nespravedlivý tragický konec typický pro starodávné legendy a mýty. Tolkien

prokázal smysl pro spravedlnost, a proto hrdina *Hobita*, který zabije draka, neumírá a nesdílí Beowulfův osud (Noel(ová), 1977, s. 60-61).

Dalším pojítkem mezi díly je představení síně, kde válečníci pijí a hodují. Síně Meduseld krále Théodena štědře hostí válečníky v *Pánovi Prstenů* a koresponduje se síní Heorot, zmíněnou v *Beowulfově*, jak ve funkci, tak ve vzhledu. Obě síně jsou dokonce popsány stejnou větou (Shippey, 2001, s. 99).

Zbraně jsou v Tolkienových knihách vyobrazeny jako vysoce drahocenné, obohacené popisnými jmény, nadpřirozenými schopnostmi a tajemnými původy (často vyrobeny trpaslíky nebo elfy). Meče v Tolkienových knihách se shodují s Beowulfovým Naglingem, který byl ukován Pánem Elfů. Noel(ová) nachází další spojitost v *Pánovi Prstenů*, kde zbraně vyrobené v jiném světě jsou použity smrtelníky a okamžitě shoří. To připomíná Beowulfův meč, který se rozpustil v dračí krvi, a zbyla po něm pouze rukojeť (1977, s. 63-64).

Tato díla jsou bohatě zásobena četnými zvraty děje, což přispívá k čistému požitku z četby. Mimoto je zde silný pocit, že mnohem více by mělo být řečeno o okolním světě, než bylo (Shippey, 2001, s. 49). Na druhou stranu se ale Tolkien pokoušel zjednodušit otázku víry, a aby čtenáře nezmátl, všechny reference k náboženství byly odstraněny, což nakonec vedlo k tomu, že postavy nebyly považovány ani za křesťany, ani pohany. Stejný přístup je aplikován v *Beowulfově* (Shippey, 1977, s.179).

Posledním společným motivem je sestup do podzemí, do temných (často děsivých) míst, kam se příběh přesouvá. *Hobit* a *Pán Prstenů* nabízí různorodé příklady, jako vstup do jeskyně trollů, děr zlých skřítků, temných síní pod Osamělou horou, dračího doupěte a tmavých zákoutí Morie. Tolkien se seznámil s tímto symbolem sestupu v *Beowulfově*, kde hrdina vstoupí do jezera příšer, aby zabil matku jedné z nich (Noel(ová), 1977, s. 24).

Také postavy v Tolkienově tvorbě mají své protějšky v anglosaské básni. Podle Noel(ové), čaroděj Gandalf sdílí rysy s králi pocházejícími “z moře”, příkladem z *Beowulfa* je dánský král Scyld. Také znaky králova pohřbu nalezneme u Tolkiena a to v popisu pohřbu Boromira, postavy z *Pána Prstenů*. Obě těla byla položena do lodi společně s jejich výzbrojí, zbraněmi a pokladem, a voda je vzala do neznámých končin. Beowulfův pohřeb tvoří vzor pro pohřeb krále Théodena, jediným rozdílem je chybějící hranice, která byla postavena pro Beowulfa (1977, s. 173). Shippey ještě dodává, že

model pro krále Théodena spolu s jezdci z Marky, co se týče jejich chování, způsobů a jednání, vychází z anglosaské básně (2001, s. 94-95).

Dokonce i sám hrdina Beowulf je zobrazen v *Hobitovi* a *Pánovi Prstenů*. V *Hobitovi* ho Noel(ová) přirovnává k postavě Barda, neznámého hrdiny královského původu, který má za úkol zabít draka a vlastní významnou zbraň, kterou zdědil. Tyto Bardovy rysy připomínají Aragorna, hrdinu *Pána Prstenů* (1977, s. 89). Nutno dodat, že jedna z hlavních postav *Pána Prstenů*, Frodo, vděčí za své jméno právě této staroanglické básni, kde se objevilo ve formě Froda (Carter, 2003, s. 155).

Výsledkem této analýzy a porovnání Tolkienových děl s Eddou, Kalevalou a Beowulfem, je zjištění, že Tolkien byl hluboce ovlivněn mýty a legendami v mnoha ohledech, převážně v motivech, postavách a jménech. Ale nelze říci, že slepě kopíroval, co objevil. Použil mýty a legendy čistě jako zdroj své inspirace a upravil je pro své vlastní účely tak, aby splnil své přání vytvořit novou mytologii.

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