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The Reflection of the European Mythologies in J. R. R. Tolkien's
The Silmarillion

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

Student se ve své bakalářské práci zaměří na odraz evropských mytologií v Silmarillionu od J. R. R. Tolkiena. Student se nejprve bude věnovat analýze žánru mýtu. Tolkienovo dílo zařadí do dobového literárního kontextu a poté se zaměří konkrétně na zařazení Silmarillionu do kontextu ostatních Tolkienových děl. Literární analýza bude spočívat v identifikaci prvků evropských mýtů a legend v Silmarillionu od J. R. R. Tolkiena. Student vytvoří analytický akademický text založený na dostatečném množství kvalitních primárních a sekundárních zdrojů.

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Poděkování

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ANNOTATION

This paper deals with the analysis of certain elements of the European mythologies, which are reflected in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*. The definition of specific terms concerning mythologies and the contextualization of J. R. R. Tolkien and his works are followed by the actual analysis in the second half of the paper.

KEYWORDS

Tolkien, Silmarillion, mythology, influence

TÉMA

Odraz evropských mytologií v Silmarillionu od J. R. R. Tolkiena

ANOTACE

Tato práce se zabývá analýzou určitých prvků evropských mytologií, které se odrážejí v *Silmarillionu* od J. R. R. Tolkiena. První polovina práce představuje definice konkrétních termínů týkajících se mytologií a zařazuje J. R. R. Tolkiena a jeho díla do literárního kontextu. Druhá polovina práce se již zabývá samotnou analýzou.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Tolkien, Silmarillion, mytologie, vliv

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INTRODUCTION

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is considered one of the most significant, successful and influential authors of the twentieth century. He influenced many earlier as well as current authors by his extraordinary and specifically unique attitude to forming stories. However, this begs the question: Who, or more likely what, influenced the professor Tolkien himself? This paper will try to answer that question as comprehensively as possible. Nevertheless, as the majority of scholars tend to analyse the most well-known piece of work written by J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, this paper takes a different approach. Apart from a few mentions, this paper leaves *The Lord of the Rings* completely aside and focuses mainly on his most elaborate piece of work *The Silmarillion*.

As this paper very often refers to different myths of many European mythologies and uses them for comparing with the myths which Tolkien wrote, it is necessary to define the word "myth" as well as the word "mythology". Therefore, the first chapter of this paper will provide the definition of the term "myth" from the etymological, historical and religious points of view and try to create a general definition. Moreover, the definition of the term "mythology" will follow.

J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* can be considered Mythopoeia. The definition of this unusual genre will be provided in the second chapter. Moreover, Tolkien used this term as a name for his poem, the content of which almost accurately reflects Tolkien's attitude towards the creation of his own stories and, more importantly, own myths. That fact will be described in the second chapter as well.

The third chapter will deal with the contextualization of Tolkien as an author in terms of the time period in which he wrote. The chapter will also include the comparison between his style and the style of the authors which were most prominent in that time. The chapter will be also devoted to the analysis of Tolkien's life, however, not from the biographical point of view. The chapter will emphasize specific aspects of Tolkien's life that had certain impact on his writings, such as his faith, the obsession with linguistics, his frequent participation in many literary clubs or his involvement in war conflicts during the World War I, and describe them in more detail.

As this paper analyses specifically *The Silmarillion*, the fourth chapter will describe the different approach which Tolkien took during the realisation of *The Silmarillion* as opposed to the realisation of his other works. *The Silmarillion* was his lifelong work and he

was not able to finish it until his death. Therefore, his son Christopher Tolkien took over the responsibility for the publishing of his father's work. The contribution of Christopher Tolkien will be also described in this chapter.

Finally, the fifth chapter, which is also the longest chapter, will analyse the specific elements of the tales and the myths of *The Silmarillion* which are similar to the specific elements of the certain myths of the European mythologies, compare them and describe their resemblance.

1 MYTHOLOGY

As this paper analyses the reflection of European mythologies in the certain work, firstly, it is important to define the term "mythology" and its meaning. This chapter will characterize that term as well as the term "myth" itself as the term "myth" is morphologically the part of the term "mythology". The definition of the term "myth" will be provided first, following by the definition of the term "mythology", which will build on the basis of already characterized term "myth".

The term "myth" is not as easily describable and specifiable as it may seem as the meaning of this term changes depending on which scholar is explaining it. The different approaches to this issue completely change the definition of "myth". As John Lindow indicates in his book, in everyday conversation between ordinary people the word "myth" can simply refer to something that is not true. (Lindow, 2001, p. 1). Online Etymology Dictionary mentions that general sense of "myth" as untrue story or rumour emerged as late as in 1840. (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013a). There is no wonder then that, according to Lindow, scholars are more circumspect in the use of this word, however, even some experts differ in defining this term. Anthropologists use it to refer to a narration about the establishment of some social institution or the formation of customs according to which people behaved. On the other hand, historians of religion tend to use this term only for sacred texts. (Lindow, 2001, p. 1). But none of the definitions mentioned above is appropriate for the issues which this paper covers.

The approach to this definition from the scholars that dedicated their life to study mythology is completely different. However, it is very difficult to come up with a generally applicable definition as Anthony S. Mercatante and James R. Dow admit that "there are as many definitions of myth as there are those who are interested in them." (Mercatante, 2009, p. XI). Although they do not offer their own definition, from their point of view, there are several things that most of the definitions share. One of them is the fact that myths are very old stories which were usually transferred orally from one generation to another. (Mercatante, 2009, p. XI). Therefore, the vast majority of myths are anonymous or at least rather speculative in the terms of authorship. That statement corresponds with etymological point of view as it presents Online Etymology Dictionary. According to that dictionary, even though the term "myth" came directly from French "Mythe", it initially originated from Modern Latin "mythus" and Greek "mythos", which was used in its original meaning to refer to any

speech, thought, story or basically anything delivered by word of mouth. (Online Etymology dictionary, 2013a). However, there is no doubt that the term "myth" has become significantly different from its initial meaning.

According to Mercatante and Dow there is disagreement about the credibility of the contents of myths, which divides scholars into two groups. One group believes that myths were "sacred narratives" for the people of that time while the other group supposes that the person who recorded the respective myth believed that the myth is completely true. (Mercatante, 2009, p. XI). All scholars of myth also agree on the fact that myths were basically invented to explain the phenomena that were beyond the understanding of people in the past. (Mercatante, 2009, p. XI). They did not know science and could not explain certain events happening around them logically, therefore, they considered those phenomena to be the actions of some supernatural beings. Kathleen N. Daly specifies those certain phenomena:

> "Myths are as ancient as humankind and have their origin in the efforts of primitive people to explain the mysteries of the world around them: thunder and lightning; floods and fire; rain and drought; earthquakes and volcanic eruptions; night and day; the Sun, Moon, and stars; the seasons; the existence of plants and animals, man and woman; and birth and death." (Daly, 2010, p. VII).

All those natural phenomena has probably brought forth some of the existing myths. Other myths could originate from the need of people for some natural order of things. According to Kathleen N. Daly, myths also accomplished to fulfil the need for belief "(...) in some higher being or beings who have power over the daily lives and fate of humankind." She also adds that "many of the world's myth systems include a sky god or father of all and an Earth Mother." (Daly, 2010, p. VII).

Even though Mercatante and Dow agree with all the statements mentioned above, they also suggest that myths were "(...) never really intended to explain anything, but were rather poetic devices that gave concrete images to unexplainable phenomena." They also add that the people of past might use myths in the same way as people use metaphors nowadays. (Mercatante and Dow, 2009, p. XI - XII). Although this suggestion is not unreasonable, it also cannot be proved with any evidence.

Even though myths could serve at the beginning as tools for people to be able to explain the phenomena which they did not understand, they became something else eventually. As Kathleen N. Daly proclaims in her publication, myth is understood by many historians of myths and scholars of human social development as "a part of a religious belief system and an attempt to explain human existence." (Daly, 2010, p. VII). From all those mentioned definitions of the term "myth", this definition is the most similar to Tolkien's point

of view. The event when Tolkien defined his specific point of view on the meaning of this term is described by Tolkien's biographer Humphrey Carpenter in detail in his publication *J. R. R. Tolkien – A Biography*. One windy evening in September in 1931, he was invited for dinner by his friend C. S. Lewis, a member of The Inklings literary group, whose member Tolkien was as well, and the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the series of books which is sometimes compared to Tolkien's works. After dinner they were discussing the purpose of myths. C. S. Lewis, who had already professed theism but who was not a Christian at that time, had doubts about the credibility of myths. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 132–133). According to Joseph Pearce, the author of the article *J. R. R. Tolkien: Truth and Myth* which was published in *Lay Witness* magazine in September 2001, Lewis told Tolkien that "myths are lies and therefore worthless, even though breathed through silver." (Lewis in Pearce, 2001). The thought hidden in the words which Tolkien replied that day left a deep impression and astonishment on Lewis and had a huge impact on his later life. Tolkien said:

> "No. they are not lies. Far from being lies they are the best way — sometimes the only way — of conveying truths that would otherwise remain inexpressible. We have come from God, and inevitably the myths woven by us, though they contain error, reflect a splintered fragment of the true light, the eternal truth that is with God. Myths may be misguided, but they steer however shakily toward the true harbour, whereas materialistic "progress" leads only to the abyss and the power of evil." (Tolkien in Pearce, 2001).

The conveyance that can be extracted from that quotation is following: Tolkien claims that, even though myths were created by human beings, they, in fact, came from God as he created all humanity at the beginning. He also admits that only myths can lead humankind along the right path as opposed to materialism, which is, according to Tolkien, the road to the abyss.

Considering all those attempts by different people to come up with the definition of the term "myth", one can conclude that there is no general definition of that term. This subject matter can be approached from many different points of view and therefore, each one of those definitions is true as long as it is put in the appropriate context. However, the topic of this paper deals specifically with the ancient myths with no further attempt to explain them in terms of sociology, psychology or religion. Therefore, whenever this paper refers to myths further on, the general definition that does not contradict any of the already mentioned definitions will be used. The features which all those collected definitions share are summarized in the following definition: the "myths" are the writings of certain tales or

narratives from the past that had certain importance and value for the people in the past, have survived the centuries and are counted among the classical tales nowadays.[1]

As there was stated at the beginning of the chapter, the definition of the term "mythology" follows. The word "mythology" contains the stem "myth", the word which was analysed in detail in the previous text. However, the meaning of the morpheme "logy", which is attached to the free morpheme "myth", is as ambiguous as the word "myth". According to Geoffrey S. Kirk, the word "muthologia", which is the first known form of this term, meant no more than "telling of stories". (Kirk, 1973, p. 8). This correctly corresponds with the fact that the term "myth", if used alone, could refer to any speech or story as mentioned before. Kirk also adds that the first known user of the term "muthologia" was the Greek philosopher Plato. (Kirk, 1973, p. 8). Fritz Graf, the author of the publication *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* also states that, according to early Greeks, the word "logos" was synonymous with the word "mythos". (Graf, 1996, p. 1). From the comparison of those mentioned words as they are recorded in the Online Etymology Dictionary, it emerged that the shared semantic feature was the meaning of "speech". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013b). Graf concludes this similarity with the statement that "mythologos" was a word which referred to a "storyteller" thus proving the correctness of Kirk's statements. (Graf, 1996, p. 1–2).

On the other hand, the Online Etymology Dictionary states that the word "mythology", which was borrowed by English during the early fifteenth century from Middle French "mythologie" and directly from Late Latin "mythologia", meant "exposition of myths". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013c). This fact can be supported by Kirk, who states in his publication that the word "mythology" can also denote "the content of myths" or "a particular set of myths". (Kirk, 1973, p. 8). The conclusion based on the connection of the above-mentioned findings is that the meaning of the term "myth" can be "the collection of particular myths and the specific content of those myths".

The last point of view from which the analysis of the term "mythology" can be approached is based on the Online Etymology Dictionary. The word "mythology", if analysed by individual separated morphemes, can be divided into "myth", the meaning of which was already analysed, and "logy", which is a word-forming element meaning "study". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013d). These findings can be concluded by the statement that the meaning of the term "mythology" can also be "the study of myths". This fact can be further

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[1] the author's attempt to summarize the general features which the mentioned definitions of the term "myth" share

supported by Geoffrey S. Kirk who also adds that the word "mythology" can denote "the study of myths". (Kirk, 1973, p. 8).

In conclusion, there are three evident possibilities of comprehending the meaning of the term "mythology". The first one, "telling of stories", is the original meaning which was put into use by the ancient Greeks. This meaning is, however, highly old-fashioned nowadays and not used anymore. The second possibility, "the collection of particular myths and the content of those myths", is usable much more. Whenever this paper mentions the term "mythology", it will refer to this meaning because it is the most appropriate one as this paper deals with specific myths and, more importantly, their specific contents. Finally, the third possibility, "study of myths", is used as a meaning mostly by the scholars of myth, who usually intend to explain deeper meaning or the context of myths.

2   MYTHOPOEIA

The Silmarillion by J. R. R. Tolkien, or, more generally, all those tales from the ancient times of Tolkien's fictional world Arda, which are also mentioned in his other works such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* or *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*, can be considered Mythopoeia. As this paper analyses the specific elements of certain mythopoeic stories from *The Silmarillion* in the subsequent parts, it is important to characterize the term "mythopoeia".

As the word "mythopoeia" may suggest, it is morphologically related to the word "myth", which was already analysed from different points of view in more detail in the previous chapter. Unfortunately, Online Etymology Dictionary does not offer the analysis and the meaning of the noun "mythopoeia", however, it offers the analysis of the adjective "mythopoeic", which is, according to the English language rules, obviously related to the noun "mythopoeia". Online Etymology Dictionary states that the word "mythopoeic" was borrowed from Greek. The original Greek word "mythopoiein" consisted of the word "mythos", meaning a "myth", and the word "poeien", which meant "to make" or "to create". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013e). Therefore, the whole compound was a verb and meant "to create a myth". Online Etymology Dictionary also adds that the meaning of the adjective "mythopoeic" means "pertaining to the creation of myths". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013e). It can be derived from that fact that the noun "mythopoeia" means "the creation of myths". According to a different source, the Oxford Dictionaries, the definition of the word "mythopoeia" is "the making of a myth or myths". (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2013). That fact proves the etymological analysis and the subsequent derivation to be valid.

Mythopoeia is also the name of one of Tolkien's poems. According to Humphrey Carpenter, this poem was created on the impulse, which J. R. R. Tolkien felt after the discussion between him and C. S. Lewis about the credibility of myths as was mentioned in the previous chapter. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 134). The discussion concerned the fact that C. S. Lewis did not believe in the truthfulness of myths as opposed to Tolkien, who believed that myths are true. The first line of the poem *Mythopoeia* says "Philomythus to Misomythus". (Tolkien, 2013). Online Etymology Dictionary provides the explanation of the meaning of those words. According to mentioned dictionary, the word-forming element "philo-" means "loving, fond of, tending to". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013f). Thus, Philomythus, who is mentioned by Tolkien in his poem, can be translated as "the lover of myths" and therefore,

it can be inferred that the Philomythus is Tolkien himself. The meaning of the other word, Misomythus, can be ascertained in the same manner. According to Online Etymology Dictionary, the meaning of the word-forming element "miso-" is "hater" or "hatred". (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2013g). Thus, Misomythus can be translated as "the hater of myths". From that discussion between J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, it can be concluded that the Misomythus can be reference to C. S. Lewis. Humphrey Carpenter also states in his publication *J. R. R. Tolkien – A Biography* that there is a note which says "To C. S. L." on one manuscript of the poem *Mythopoeia*, therefore, proving the mentioned deduction. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 133). Concerning the contents of the mentioned poem, the article by Joseph Pearce from *Lay Witness* magazine proves to be useful. He describes the act of the discussion between Tolkien and Lewis but this depiction corresponds with the actual text of the poem well. He states:

> "(...) Tolkien explained to Lewis that the story of Christ was the true myth at the very heart of history and at the very root of reality. Whereas the pagan myths were manifestations of God expressing Himself through the minds of poets, using the images of their "mythopoeia" to reveal fragments of His eternal truth. (...)" (Pearce, 2001).

That statement perfectly characterizes what Tolkien wrote about in his poem *Mythopoeia*. In that poem, Tolkien calls human being the Sub-creator who creates other myths only as a sub-creation which is based on the primary creation that came from God. He states that "we make still by the law in which we're made". He also opposes "materialists", who he calls "progressive apes" and suggests that "their progress tends to the dark abyss". (Tolkien, 2013). Nevertheless, the essential information which is the most important for characterization of the term "mythopoeia" is also provided. From the whole poem, the main idea stands out. That idea which can be inferred from the text of the poem is that even though the legends that people make are new, they still convey the essential truth. (Tolkien, 2013). That is precisely the way in which Tolkien created one of his most elaborate works *The Silmarillion*.

In conclusion, one can assume that, while writing all his works, Tolkien still kept in mind this eternal truth as it is confirmed by his biographer Humphrey Carpenter in the article *J. R. R. Tolkien: Truth and Myth* by Joseph Pearce, who quoted Carpenter's words there. Carpenter states: "In expounding this belief in the inherent truth of mythology, Tolkien had laid bare the centre of his philosophy as a writer, the creed that is at the heart of *The Silmarillion*." (Carpenter in Pearce, 2001). Pearce adds that "it is also the creed at the heart of all his other work." (Pearce, 2001). Taking into consideration the fact that Tolkien believed in the truthfulness of mythology, it is also obvious that he must have been greatly inspired by the

ancient mythological stories in the process of creating his own myths, which later became the contents of his work *The Silmarillion*, if he wanted those myths to give the impression of believability. That statement leads to the fact that the reflection of those mythologies in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* is precisely the topic which this paper will analyse.

3   TOLKIEN AND HIS LIFE

J. R. R. Tolkien was one of the most significant writers of the twentieth century. He was born at the end of the nineteenth century, specifically in 1892, and during his eighty-one-year-long life, he published many books which are nowadays considered classical works of literature. Even more of his works (such as *The Silmarillion*) were published posthumously thanks to the initiative of his son, Christopher Tolkien, who is still active in editing his fathers' manuscripts and still continues to publish other works of his father.

This chapter deals with the contextualization of Tolkien's work. It is important to describe time period in which he lived in terms of literary movements which were prominent at that time to be able to understand the environment in which his works were created. Moreover, it is also necessary to mention certain aspects of Tolkien's life and events which influenced his perception of the world and subsequently his stories. Owing to those descriptions, it will be much easier to understand the exceptionality of his work. The biggest emphasis will be put on the specific moments in Tolkien's life which had evident impact on his literary career.

First of all, it is important to describe the time period in which Tolkien was working on his writings, specifically, the first half of the twentieth century. This period was mainly the time of Modernism. Besides many others, it was the period of Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield or Edward Morgan Forster, for instance. The prominent role in English Modernism was played by the Bloomsbury Group, a group of English authors which some of the mentioned writers were members of. The literary critic Peter Stansky, who is cited in the publication *Masterpieces of British Modernism* by Marlowe A. Miller, stated that Bloomsbury Group was "the dominant English conduit for European Modernism". (Stansky in Miller, 2006, p. 5). As Marlowe A. Miller states in the mentioned publication, Modernists experimented with form and tried to bring something new to their work. They felt the need to find "a new language to convey the reality of experience in the modern word". Modernists tended to break traditions, experiment and freely criticize all others. (Miller, 2006, p. 5–7). Even though Tolkien maintained the critical attitude as he showed many times during the meetings of the informal literary group The Inklings, according to his biographer Humphrey Carpenter, his approach to tradition was completely different from the attitude of modernists. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 135). As Carpenter also mentions, Tolkien admired mainly Old English and Middle English poems and early Icelandic literature. As his subject of study was English

studies, profound knowledge of modern authors was not required of him. Thus, the chronologically last important piece of English literature for him was Geoffrey Chaucer. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 67). Even William Shakespeare did not rank among his favourite writers. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 3). On the other hand, according to Miller, some of the Modernists were also very interested in the antiquity, ancient literature and mythology. That approach is associated mainly with Omar Pound, T. S. Eliot and James Joyce. (Miller, 2006, p. 7). In this case, there is an obvious similarity with J. R. R. Tolkien as he was obsessed with mythology as well. However, the similarity falters in one important fact: as Miller mentions, Modernists blended the fragments of ancient mythology with the modern understanding of the world, therefore creating the connection which Tolkien did not correspond with. (Miller, 2006, p. 7). That is the major difference between the Modernist approach and the approach of Tolkien. J. R. R. Tolkien loved mythology as such. He had studied different mythologies for many years and when he was working on his stories, mythology was not only an inspiration for him, he created stories which had their very essence in various mythologies. [2] Taking into considerations all the above mentioned statements, it can be concluded that, although J. R. R. Tolkien shared some opinions and attitudes towards English literature with Modernists, who are considered to be the most prominent literary movement of the first half of the twentieth century, he had a very different perception of the high-quality literature than the majority of writers at that time. His opinion on the process of writing also differs from the approach of Modernists.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the description of the most significant aspects of Tolkien's life which had an evident impact on his perception of the world and subsequently his literary career follows. This chapter will proceed with the analysis of the relationship between J. R. R. Tolkien and his long-time friend C. S. Lewis and their mutual influence, Tolkien's perception of death, his perspective on religion, his obsession with languages, his participation in many literary groups and, finally, it will provide a very brief mention of his professional success.

Contrary to the majority of the authors of the first half of the twentieth century, who did not share Tolkien's point of views on literature, there were some people who shared Tolkien's love of mythology as well as his notion about the high-quality literature being old myths and legends. It would be unacceptable to omit Tolkien's colleague and long-time friend C. S. Lewis as he had a strong impact on Tolkien's life and, more importantly, his writings.

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[2] Those statements were based on the relationship of J. R. R. Tolkien to mythologies, which was described in the previous chapters.

According to Humphrey Carpenter, C. S. Lewis, who was not called by his family or friends otherwise than Jack, met Tolkien for the first time during the meeting of the English Studies Department in Oxford in 1926. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 130). They got along with each other well as they shared many opinions and occasionally they even influenced each other. For instance, according to Carpenter, they both considered news to be trivial and agreed on the fact that the only truth can be found in literature. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 109). The important fact that could help to establish their friendship was also their shared obsession with mythology. As Carpenter states, they both delighted in the complexity of *The Poetic Edda*, a collection of Old Norse poems, *The Prose Edda* or *Saga of the Völsungs*, to mention a few, and therefore, their close friendship was inevitable. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 131). Both Tolkien and Lewis were also members of many literary groups, which will be described in more detail later in this chapter. The great friendship of theirs can be also proved by the fact which Humphrey Carpenter recorded in his book. Even though C. S. Lewis died almost ten years before J. R. R. Tolkien, before his death Lewis wrote an obituary about Tolkien which was printed in *The Times* after his death. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 123). On the other hand, they had some differences between them. According to Carpenter, unlike C. S. Lewis, who kept sending his writings to publishers without further revision, Tolkien was a perfectionist. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 126). Lewis wrote about Tolkien that only a mention about publishing was enough to prompt him to revise the text during which some new ideas occurred to him. Thus, instead of the final version of the previous piece of writing, his friends were given the first version of the new piece of writing. (Lewis in Carpenter, 1993, p. 126). Lewis also adds that when Tolkien's friends criticised some parts of his writing, there were two ways of Tolkien's reaction. He either did not take the criticism into account or started to rewrite the whole piece. (Lewis in Carpenter, 1993, p. 132). All those statements show why so many of his writings were not published during his life and had to be edited and published posthumously by his son Christopher Tolkien. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 126). Humphrey Carpenter also mentions that Tolkien played an essential part in Lewis' conversion to Christianity. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 134). Thus, he contributed to the fact that Lewis created popular series of books *The Chronicles of Narnia* as this piece of literature is considered to contain powerful Christian motives. On the other hand, their influence on each other also worked vice versa. As Michael Coren states in his publication *J. R. R. Tolkien: The Man Who Created The Lord of the Rings*, C. S. Lewis often visited Tolkien and always asked Tolkien how he had proceeded with the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* insisting that he had to finish it. (Coren, 2002, p. 87). According to Carpenter, Lewis also insisted that Tolkien should hasten and finish *The*

Silmarillion, his lifelong piece of work. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 134). Even Tolkien himself acknowledged that Lewis' attitude really helped him to realize that his writings could be interested for wider audience. Therefore, C. S. Lewis significantly contributed to the final completion and subsequent publishing of many Tolkien's pieces of work. Those were some of Tolkien's character traits described in contrast to or from the point of view of his life-long friend C. S. Lewis.

In his works, Tolkien is usually not reluctant to the depiction of death. His stories are full of dying. However, he does not depict death as something ugly and terrible. In his works, death has its own inextricable place being described as something inevitable. It should be emphasized that death was given a significant importance in Tolkien's work. In *The Silmarillion*, it is said that when Eru Ilúvatar created Men, they were given a gift of freedom from the restraint of fate but they were also given a gift of death as "death is their fate, the gift of Ilúvatar, which as Time wears even the Powers shall envy." (Tolkien, 1999, p. 36). That approach towards death as being something inevitable is not surprising as Tolkien experienced many deaths in his family since his childhood. According to Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien's father, who lived in South Africa, because of his job, died of rheumatic fever when Tolkien was four years old. Even though, he did not retain many memories of his father, it must have left some impact on him as the family intended to return and young Ronald was looking forward to seeing his father. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 23). However, it was not the last suffering. According to Coren, at the age of twelve, Ronald Tolkien lost his mother, who meant a lot to him as well as his brother Hilary. She sacrificed everything for them and her children were always the first concern before everything else, therefore her death must have been a huge loss for the young brothers. (Coren, 2002, p. 29). The other fact worth mentioning is Tolkien's participation in World War I, at that time known as the Great War. As Coren states, Tolkien's unit participated in the Battle of the Somme, one of the bloodiest conflicts of the war. He survived, however, the great majority of his friends did not. (Coren, 2002, p. 46–47). As can be seen from the above mentioned facts, there is no wonder that death held such an important place in Tolkien's pieces of writing.

The other very important aspect that is reflected in majority of Tolkien's works is religion. Even though it does not have to be obvious at first sight, the fact that Tolkien was a devoted Christian should suggest so and the reflection will be briefly described at the beginning of the fifth chapter. According to Carpenter, the majority of Tolkien's relatives on both his mother's side and his father's side were devoted Anglicans. So was also Tolkien's mother, however, only until 1900. Soon after her husband's death, Mabel Tolkien decided to

convert to Roman Catholicism. Her family was outraged. Her father strongly disapproved of her decision and her brother-in-law Walter Incledon, who had provided a financial aid after the death of Mabel's husband, withdrew his money. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 29). As Michael Coren mentions, after the death of Tolkien's mother, he and his younger brother Hilary knew that the Roman Catholic faith would be more important for them than ever before. They perceived it as a legacy of their mother, who sacrificed everything for them. (Coren, 2002, p. 29). A few years later, J. R. R. Tolkien described his mother as a martyr. (Tolkien in Carpenter, 1993, p. 35). As Humphrey Carpenter states, initially, Tolkien connected faith with his mother and therefore, after her death it filled the empty place in his heart. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 35). The statement written by Joseph Pearce in his article *J. R. R. Tolkien: Truth and Myth* appropriately concludes the influence of religion on Tolkien's pieces of work. He says that "Tolkien's conversion was crucial to both the making of the man and the shaping of the myth he created". (Pearce, 2001).

As a linguist, Tolkien was obsessed with many different languages. This obsession can be considered as one of the most important and most influential aspects in his literary career as, according to Helena Chocholouškova, at the beginning, the creating of Tolkien's stories was caused by the fact that he invented the artificial languages and wanted to create background for those languages and peoples that would speak those languages. (Chocholouškova, 2005, p. 9). The interest in languages emerged as soon as during his early childhood. As Humphrey Carpenter mentions, Ronald Tolkien and his brother Hilary usually spent their childhood holidays with their cousins with whom they were, among other things, creating new artificial languages. Naturally, those languages were not very sophisticated as Tolkien was still a child but since this moment he did not stop thinking about creating something more elaborated. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 39). According to Carpenter, Tolkien's mother realised very soon that Ronald Tolkien was very skilful in languages. In the King Edward's School, he studied Latin and Greek. However, the knowledge of Latin, Greek, French and German was not enough for Tolkien. He started to analyse the elements which the languages shared. He wanted to understand how the languages functioned. In other words, he started to study philology. He learnt Anglo-Saxon, which is also known as Old English, however, the simple excerpt from the textbook stopped being sufficient for him encouraging him to read the original version of the Old English poem *Beowulf,* which enthralled him. He also studied Middle English and therefore discovered *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or the poem *Pearl,* both of which he later translated to modern English. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 38). Concerning the studying of the extinct languages such as Gothic language, it is interesting

that Tolkien usually tended to create new words to fill in the gaps in the vocabulary of those languages, which gradually led to the creation of his own complete languages. Moreover, he also developed those languages in terms of their history as he invented the early forms of the already developed words necessary for the derivation of other words. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 40). His intention was to make his artificial languages as real as possible. During his life, he studied many other modern and extinct languages but, according to Humphrey Carpenter, one of his most important artificial languages, Quenya, the language of the High Elves, was strongly inspired by Finnish. In 1917, when Tolkien was only twenty-five years old, this language already included hundreds of words. However, in Tolkien's world, Quenya developed from an earlier language called Common Eldarin, which was used by all ancient Elves. Subsequently, Tolkien created another Elvish tongue on the basis of Common Eldarin. It was Sindarin, the language of the Grey Elves, which was inspired by Welsh. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 58, 89). As it is apparent from all those mentioned examples, Tolkien's obsession with languages and philology was huge and those specific linguistic details definitely contributed to the aspects that make his world so real.

Another aspect of Tolkien's life which certainly shaped him as an author was his participation in many different clubs and groups, many of which he found himself. After many personal adversities mentioned in previous paragraphs, according to Humphrey Carpenter, Ronald Tolkien became attached to the school. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 46). He spent a lot of time in school library and was given the title of librarian together with some of his friends after some time. This group of friends gradually transformed into the first important unofficial literary group which Tolkien was part of. It was later known as T. C. B. S., which was the abbreviation for Tea Club and Barrovian Society named after the favourite activity and the favourite tea shop of the members. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 46–47). Tolkien corresponded with many members of T. C. B. S. throughout his whole life, unfortunately, many of them died during World War One. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 66, 71, 80, 81). As Carpenter continues, Tolkien began studying at Exeter College in Oxford in 1911. Concerning the participation in school clubs, Tolkien was not a minimalist. He joined Essayistic Club and Dialectic Society and participated in Stapeldon, which was a debate society at Exeter College. Furthermore, he even founded his own club which was called Apolaustics. In the manner of T. C. B. S., the club was intended mainly for presenting papers and debating. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 54). Already as a teacher in Oxford, according to Carpenter, Tolkien also founded an unofficial book club called Coalbiters. This club was primarily intended for reading Icelandic sagas and all members of the club were teachers. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 112). C. S. Lewis was also one of

the members. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 130). However, the most important of all groups which Tolkien ever participated in was The Inklings. Carpenter describes that The Inklings was a group of friends who were all men and Christians and majority of them were interested in literature. He also emphasises that it was not an official group with official membership. Their meetings usually took place in a pub The Eagle and Child or in the college room of C. S. Lewis, who was also a part of the group. When they gathered, they read their manuscripts to each other and were criticised afterwards. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 134–135). As Tolkien himself commented on the name of their group, it was a humorous pun implying indefinite images and those who dip their pens into ink. (Tolkien in Carpenter in Neubauer, 2010, p. 12). Tolkien's manuscripts which later became known as *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* or *The Silmarillion* were also publicly criticised during their sessions for the first time. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 135, 153). As it is obvious from the above mentioned facts, Tolkien was very active in terms of school clubs as well as in terms of the participation in many other literary groups during his life. Particularly, the literary group The Inklings had the most evident impact on his literary career as it was during the meetings of this group when Tolkien got important feedback for his later well-known pieces of work.

Finally, it is appropriate to at least briefly mention some of the biggest professional success of J. R. R. Tolkien. According to Michael Coren, after the World War I, he worked as a lexicographer in Oxford. However, he wanted to become a teacher and pass his wisdom on the others. (Coren, 2002, p. 47, 49). He started as a professor at the University of Leeds and became a head of Department of English Studies eventually. Nevertheless, in 1925, he filled the free post as a professor of Anglo-Saxon at the University of Oxford. In 1945, he became a professor of English language and literature specializing in Middle English. (Coren, 2002, p. 53, 85). Finally, one year before his death, the doctorate honoris causa and the Order of the British Empire was conferred on him, thus indicating his extraordinary life.

This chapter was intended to emphasize the most significant milestones and moments in the life of J. R. R. Tolkien which had evident impact on his pieces of work. Intentionally, specific references to Tolkien's works were usually omitted as this paper does not aim at description of the origins of all Tolkien's pieces of work. However, due to the fact that this paper analyses specifically J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*, the description of the origins of *The Silmarillion* and the original intentions of J. R. R. Tolkien will be the central content of the following chapter.

4   TOLKIEN AND THE SILMARILLION

The previous chapter was mainly focused on the aspects of Tolkien's life that somehow influenced his works. This chapter, however, will briefly describe the origin of one of the most elaborated of Tolkien's pieces of writing and the subject matter of this paper, *The Silmarillion*. As opposed to *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*, which were published during Tolkien's life, *The Silmarillion* was published posthumously by his son Christopher Tolkien, therefore, this chapter will also explain why Tolkien did not manage to finish *The Silmarillion* and describe his son's contribution.

As Christopher Tolkien himself states in the foreword of *The Silmarillion*, J. R. R. Tolkien conceived *The Silmarillion* as the compilation of old stories, myths and narratives from the years before the world has been created and the First and Second Age of the world, Tolkien's Arda, which were collected by different narrators and scribes. (Tolkien, C., 1977, p. vi). Tolkien presented those stories as an agelong narratives or annals which survived thousands years up until the Third Age, which is the time when *The Hobbit* or the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* takes place and in comparison with those very old ages, the Third Age functions as the present of Tolkien's Arda as many ordinary inhabitants of the Middle-earth no longer believe those stories to be true. Christopher Tolkien also adds that the concept of *The Silmarillion* being the compilation of old tales has, in fact, parallel with reality as the majority of those tales and myths were created by J. R. R. Tolkien much earlier than his later works such as *The Lord of the Rings*, where many allusions from the myths or tales which were compiled and known as *The Silmarillion* occurred. (Tolkien, C., 1977, p. vi). The description of Tolkien's initial intentions and his early works relating to *The Silmarillion* will be briefly introduced in the following paragraphs.

Tolkien's initial intention, which later became an obsession, was to create the mythology for England as, according to one of his letters to Milton Waldman, he was "grieved by the poverty of his own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (...), not of the quality that he sought and found in the legends of other lands." (Tolkien, 1999, p. xi). Tolkien refers to extensive literary heritage of ancient Greece or the Scandinavian countries. He also acknowledges that "there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what he felt to be missing." (Tolkien, 1999, p. xi). Gradually, this grief changed into an obsession. As Tolkien states he wanted to create the compilation of more or less connected

tales which would be consisted of all possible types of myths from cosmogonical myths to romantic tales. He wanted the smaller tales to be based on the cosmogonical background and therefore all those stories would form a mythology, which he could dedicate to his country, England. (Tolkien in Carpenter, 1993, p. 85). Although he did not put his mythology into the actual England but rather into the fictional world, the idea of the creation of elaborate mythology remained the same.

Some of the first stories that later became the part of *The Silmarillion* were created even before J. R. R. Tolkien decided to compose his mythology, however. According to Helena Chocholoušková, the first writing, the story of which eventually became the last tale of *Quenta Silmarillion*, the longest and most important part of *The Silmarillion*, was written as early as in 1914. Tolkien was only twenty-two years old at that time. The writing was a poem called *The Voyage of Earendel the Evening Star*. (Chocholoušková, 2005, p. 8). At that time Tolkien also worked on his artificial languages Quenya and Sindarin as was mentioned in more detail in the previous chapter. As Carpenter states, Tolkien came to the conclusion that he had to create the history in which those languages could evolve if he wanted to elaborate them as comprehensively as possible. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 85). That intent was intensified by the desire to create the mythology for England. Thus, according to Chocholoušková, J. R. R. Tolkien decided to rewrite the poem about Earendel to the version which is much closer to the story and setting which appear in *The Silmarillion*. (Chocholoušková, 2005, p. 9). According to Carpenter, Tolkien also decided that the compilation of those myths would bear a name *The Book of Lost Tales*. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 86). As Helena Chocholoušková adds, those tales were presented as an old narratives of the old times which were written down by a seafarer Eriol as he had heard them from the Elves. (Chocholoušková, 2005, p. 10). Even though the concept of Eriol does not preserved in *The Silmarillion*, this earlier approach of old narratives is visible even there, given that the majority of the chapters in *The Silmarillion* starts with the words "It is told (...)" or "Among the tales (...) there are (...)". (Tolkien, 1977, p. 27, 37, 108, 189). According to Carpenter, the first story which Tolkien considered the part of *The Book of Lost Tales* was written while he was recuperating from illness during World War One. It was *The Fall of Gondolin*, the last elven city. The tale describes the battle between the Elves and the army of Morgoth, who will be more described in the next chapter. After the destruction of the city, the remainder of the Elves flee through a secret tunnel saving the king's grandson Earendel. (Carpenter, 1993, p.

87–88). The character of Earendel[3] connected those two early tales from Arda. Helena Chocholoušková also states that *The Book of Lost Tales*, tales of which increased in amount during those years, was almost finished in 1923. However, the potential publishing was ruined by one of Tolkien's habits. It was a manifestation of his perfectionism, the habit which was mentioned in the previous chapter. Tolkien did not finish the book but rather started to rewrite, change and adjust some parts, thence never finished the book. However, in 1926, he created an abridged version of *The Book of Lost Tales*. That abridged version became the basis for *The Silmarillion*, which was edited and published by Tolkien's son Christopher after J. R. R. Tolkien's death. (Chocholoušková, 2005, p. 11).

Furthermore, as a devoted admirer of his father's work, Christopher Tolkien continued going through his father's lifelong writings about Arda and the different versions of its tales. Thus, according to Carpenter, in 1980, he published *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*. (Carpenter, 1993, p. 246). Moreover, as The Tolkien Estate states, the twelve-volume *The History of Middle-earth*, which is the collection of Tolkien's both early and later writings provided with the commentary of Christopher Tolkien, was published from 1983 to 1996. Finally, in 2007, Christopher Tolkien published the full version of *The Children of Húrin*, the tale which appears also in *The Silmarillion*. (The Tolkien Estate, 2013). As can be seen, Christopher Tolkien has greatly contributed to the fact that the majority of his father's lifelong work has been finally published.

Although the previous paragraph introduced the existence of the another versions of Tolkien's tales which has been published, it is important to emphasize that this paper will deal with the analysis of the stories of Arda as they appeared in *The Silmarillion* only. That analysis of the specific elements in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* in comparison with the specific elements from the European myths follows in the next chapter.

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[3] The name Earendel was later changed to Eärendil and the latter spelling also appears in *The Silmarillion*.

5   THE REFLECTION OF THE MYTHOLOGIES IN THE SILMARILLION

J. R. R. Tolkien was highly inspired by the European mythologies while creating his stories as was mentioned before, therefore his tales are full of elements of those ancient mythologies. This chapter will deal with the analysis of those elements and their comparison with the elements of those mythologies. Firstly, the brief description of the story of *The Silmarillion* is provided as it is necessary to know the context of the analysed tales to understand the story. Then, a brief mention of the inspiration by Christianity is provided, followed by the actual analysis.

The tales of *The Silmarillion* are very complex and highly interconnected with each other in terms of consequences and impact of the previous stories on the following ones and vice versa, the chronologically subsequent stories are highly based on the chronologically earlier tales. Thus, it is necessary to be familiar with the context of the analysed stories and the relevant tales that preceded them. Therefore, very brief description of the key events from the story of *The Silmarillion* with the emphasis on the relevant details and the omitting of the inessential details which does not play such a significant role in the stories which are analysed are introduced in the subsequent text and the specific analysis follows afterwards. The story of *The Silmarillion* is divided into five parts. They are Ainulindalë, the narration of the creation of the world; Valaquenta, the description of the divine beings of Arda; Quenta Silmarillion, the longest part of the book, which narrates the history of Arda up to the end of the First Age; Akallabêth, the downfall of the realm of Númenor, which will be analysed in more detail later in the text; and finally Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age, which briefly narrates the events of *The Lord of the Rings* and which this paper will not analyse at all. The brief description of the story follows. At the beginning, there was Eru Ilúvatar and he created the Ainur, the Holy Ones. He declared to them a mighty theme and they sang the Great Music creating a vision of the world in the process. They entered Eä, the world created by Ilúvatar in the place where they had seen a vision and began to create Arda. The Ainur who entered Eä were known as the Valar, the Powers of Arda. There were also the Maiar, the lesser Ainur, who helped the Valar. There were seven Lords of the Valar and seven Queens of the Valar, some of which will be analysed later in the text. However, one of the Valar, Melkor, was corrupted and kept destroying things that the Valar created and wanted to rule the world. Therefore, the First War began, however, Melkor was finally forced to flee before the wrath

of the Valar. Then the Valar dwelled peacefully in the centre of Arda until the Spring of Arda when Melkor returned and destroyed the Two Lamps, which the Valar had created to illuminate the whole world, changing the shape of the world in the process. Therefore the Valar departed to the Land of Aman, the westernmost continent, which will be analysed in more detail later in the text, and created a magnificent realm there. The Vala Yavanna created the Two Trees of Valinor, which illuminated only the Land of the Valar. After many years, the Firstborn Children of Ilúvatar, the Elves, awoke in the east of the Middle-earth. They were invited to Aman and some of them accepted the Great Journey as their departure was called. However, some of the Elves left and stayed in Beleriand, the westernmost region of the Middle-earth, as their chief Elwë, who was known as Thingol from that time, met Melian, one of the Maiar. They fell in love and founded the kingdom of Doriath there. Their daughter Lúthien takes part in the story which will be analysed later in the text. Meanwhile, in Aman, Fëanor, the son of the King of the Noldor, one of the clans of the Elves, created the Silmarils, beautiful gems, from the light of the Two Trees of Valinor. However, Melkor destroyed the Two Trees, stole the Silmarils and returned to the Middle-earth. Fëanor named Melkor Morgoth, meaning The Black Enemy in Sindarin, and he was called Morgoth from that point on. Despite the disapproval of the Valar, Fëanor and many Noldor left Aman to obtain the Silmarils once again, killing some of their kin in the process. The Valar condemned them for what they had done and enclosed Aman. The Valar created the Sun and the Moon from the remnants of the Two Trees and sent them to illuminate the Middle-earth. At that time, the First Age began and the Secondborn Children of Ilúvatar, the Men, awoke. The Elves and Men experienced many events in the Middle-earth including a few great battles with Morgoth. The Elves also founded two great cities, Nargothrond and Gondolin, which were hidden from Morgoth. Some of those stories will be described in more detail in the analysis. Finally, after many years, Eärendil, the descendant of the Elves and Men, found the shores of Aman and pleaded with the Valar to help them against Morgoth, thus the Valar defeated him and banished him from the known world during the War of Wrath. The tale of the downfall of the realm Númenor follows but it is described in more detail during the analysis, therefore, it is not necessary to mention it here. That was the description of the story of *The Silmarillion* as briefly as possible, nevertheless, it was necessary to mention the important events of Arda as they will be referenced to during the analysis. The analysis of the specific elements of *The Silmarillion* and their comparison to the specific parts of the European mythologies follows.

As can be seen from the description of the creation of Arda, there are many facts which can be considered as the inspiration by Christianity. As Tolkien was a devoted

Christian and his faith meant a lot for him as was mentioned in previous chapters, Christianity is an important part of his myths, even though it does not have to be recognized at first sight. Tolkien's Arda is ruled by the Valar, who highly resemble the pagan gods as is described in more detail later in the text. That similarity was intentional as Tolkien himself acknowledged in one of his letter to Milton Waldman. He even intensified this similarity by the fact that Men referred to the Valar as the gods in *The Silmarillion*. Tolkien also added in his letter that the Valar are only angelic powers who were created by Ilúvatar, who Tolkien calls God in his letter. (Tolkien, 1999, p. xiv). Furthermore, Elves and Men were not created by the Valar at the beginning but they were created by Ilúvatar. The only exceptions are the Dwarves, who were created by the Vala Aulë, however, he had to get the permission of Ilúvatar, who gave them a life; and the Orcs, who were, in fact, the Elves at the beginning but Melkor corrupted them. Thus, it can be concluded that all the living being came from Ilúvatar at the beginning. In his letter, Tolkien even did not refer to Men and the Elves as The Children of Ilúvatar, as they are referred to in *The Silmarillion*, but he called them The Children of God. (Tolkien, 1999, p. xv). Thus, it can be concluded that Ilúvatar in *The Silmarillion* functions as God in Christianiaty. That example was to illustrate that Tolkien created his world in accordance with his faith. However, as this paper does not specifically deal with this subject matter, the deeper analysis is not included.

As was mentioned at the beginning, *The Silmarillion* is highly inspired by the European mythologies, therefore the specific comparison of the most evident similarities follows. The first aspect which will be described is the similarity between Tolkien's Valar and the gods of Greek and Norse mythology. The Greek or Norse gods are usually portrayed as the lords of certain aspects of nature or the bearers of certain human attributes, skills or personality traits. Although there are no gods in Tolkien's Arda (even though the Valar are sometimes referred to as gods by unwise Men as was mentioned in the previous text), there are certain similarities between Tolkien's Valar and the mythological gods. Tolkien himself acknowledged that the pagan gods were the inspiration for the Valar, as was already mentioned. However, there is no Vala who would be the precise version of a certain Greek or Norse god, thus it must be emphasized that the similarities which will be stated are only partial and, although Tolkien could be inspired by those gods, he created his very own version of the divine beings. The first possible similarity can be found in a depiction of three most crucial beings of the Valar and the Greek gods. In Greek mythology, there are three brothers: Zeus, Poseidon and Hades. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013a). In *The Silmarillion* there are Manwë, Ulmo and Melkor but brothers are only Manwë and Melkor. However, there is a

significant similarity between those counterparts. Manwë is the lord of the realm of Arda and the master of the winds and the clouds. Zeus is also the chief deity and the god of the sky and weather. Furthermore, his symbol is the eagle, which is also the most loyal servant of Manwë, thus making the similarity even greater. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013a). The second brother, Poseidon, bears the resemblance to the Vala Ulmo as both of them are the masters of the sea and all the water that is present in the world. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013b). Finally, the last brother, Hades, is similar to Manwë's brother and the Dark Lord, Melkor. Both of them are the lords of darkness who dwell in their underground realms. Melkor dwells in his underground fortress Utumno and later Angband, whereas Hades rules the kingdom of the Underworld. Melkor's fortress is guarded by the werewolf Carcharoth while the kingdom of Hades is guarded by the three-headed dog Cerberus. Although Hades shares many elements with Melkor, he can be also compared to the Vala Mandos as both of them keeps the dead in their realms or halls, although the Halls of Mandos are occupied only by dead Elves as Men leave the Eä after their death. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013c). The Halls of Mandos can be also compared to two different places which are called Valhala and Niflheim in Norse mythology. According to the *Prose Edda*, one of the essential sources of Norse mythology which was written by Snori Sturluson in the thirteenth century, Valhalla is the hall situated in Asgard, the dwelling of the Norse gods, where Odin gathers all slain warriors. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 59, 72). On the other hand, Niflheim is, according to *Prose Edda*, the realm of the dead, which is ruled by the goddess Hel and where the people who died of an illness or the age are sent to. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 65). Tolkien does not distinguish the cause of the death, nevertheless, the resemblance between those mentioned places is evident. Another resemblance is perceptible between the Norse god Thor and the Vala Tulkas. Although Tulkas does not share Thor's ability of mastering the thunder, both of them are considered the strongest of their kind and both of them are also quick-tempered and extremely protective of the inhabitants of their world. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 60, 88). Valier, the Queens of the Valar, also share certain elements with the Norse or Greek goddesses. Namely, Estë, the spouse of Lórien, in the gardens of whom she lives, can heal any hurts or weariness. The ability of healing is also ascribed to the Norse goddess Eir. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 67). Finally, the last Vala which is compared is Vairë. She is a spouse of Mandos and lives in the Halls of Mandos with him. As Mandos knows everything that was, is and almost everything that is to come, Vairë weaves "all things that have ever been in Time into her storied webs". (Tolkien, 1999, p. 19). That highly resembles The Moirai, three goddesses in the Greek mythology, who "spin the threads of human destiny". (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013d). Those were the most

evident similarities which can be found while comparing Tolkien's Valar and the Norse or Greek gods, however, the similarities could be found between even more beings, however, that similarity would be even more partial than the one regarding mentioned examples, therefore the more detailed comparison would be redundant.

Other similarities can be found by comparing the dwelling of the Valar to the dwelling of the gods of Greek and Norse mythology. One of the potential similarities relates to the location of the dwelling of Valar and the ones of Greek or Norse gods. According to *The Silmarillion*, The Valar dwells in Valinor which is located in Aman, the continent separated from the Middle-earth by the Great Sea Belegaer. Their dwelling is fortified by the Pelóri, the Mountains of Aman. The thrones of Manwë, the chief of the Valar, and his spouse Varda are located exactly at the highest peak of the Pelóri, Taniquetil. (Tolkien, 1999, p. 16, 30). That description resembles both the dwelling of Greek gods and the dwelling of Norse gods in certain ways. As Jane Harrison describes, the Olympians, the gods of Greek Mythology, dwell on Olympus, a mountain in Thessaly. (Harrison, 1928). There is evident resemblance between the two in the fact that the dwelling of both is located in some high place which is far away from the ordinary inhabitants of that world suggesting the superiority of those divine beings. The Norse Mythology makes this superiority even greater as, according to Donald A. Mackenzie, Odin, the chief of the gods, rules in Asgard, the city which is located high above the heavens. (Mackenzie, 1912). Yet, there is still strong resemblance to Tolkien's Valar in terms of superiority and the isolation from the ordinary inhabitants of that world. Another similar aspect which is connected to the dwelling of the analysed divine beings relates to the ability to see and hear to the distant places from their dwelling. As it is written in *The Silmarillion*:

"When Manwë there ascends his throne and looks forth, if Varda is beside him, he sees further than all other eyes, through mist, and through darkness, and over the leagues of the sea. And if Manwë is with her, Varda hears more clearly than all other ears the sound of voices that cry from east to west, from the hills and the valleys, and from the dark places that Melkor has made upon Earth." (Tolkien, 1999, p. 16).

That highly resembles the ability of Odin while sitting in Hlidskjalf, the highest seat in Asgard. According to *Prose Edda*, when Odin sat in the high seat in Hlidskjalf, he saw the whole world and therefore knew everything. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 45). The similarity is evident, however, the ability of the Valar Manwë and Varda are determined by the requirement of the contemporaneous presence in Taniquetil whereas Odin's ability is permanent. Furthermore, there is another place in Valinor which highly resemblance the place from the Norse mythology. That location is Máhanaxar, the Ring of Doom, the place where the councils of

the Valar or the tribunals are held and, according to *The Silmarillion*, it is located under Telperion and Laurelin, the Two Trees of Valinor, which were described at the beginning of the chapter. (Tolkien, 1999, p. 31). The *Prose Edda* also mentions the place where gods are obliged to held tribunals every day. That location is situated at Yggdrasil, the most important tree in the Norse mythology as it is attached to all nine worlds. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 52). The similarity can be even applied to the trees as both Yggdrasil and the Two Trees of Valinor are considered sacred and of great importance for the corresponding beings. From the above mentioned similarities, it can be concluded that many mythological places in Arda bears certain resemblance to the places in the Norse or Greek mythology in terms of the importance or the function.

Another similarity can be discovered by comparing the shape of the world as described in *The Silmarillion* and in the *Poetic Edda*. According to the *Poetic Edda*, the sons of Bor, Odin and his brothers Vili and Vé, killed the giant Ymir, transported him into the middle of Ginnungagap, the void, and created the earth from him. From his flash they created the land and from his bones they created mountains. Afterwards they created the sea from his blood and enclosed the whole earth with the sea. It is also mentioned that the sea cannot be crossed. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 43–44). The creation of Tolkien's Arda did not involve killing and any such transformation, however, certain similarities can be found there. Similar to the Norse mythology, there was the Void before the world has been created. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the vision of Arda was created by the Ainur while they sang the Music, which was unfolded by Ilúvatar. After they entered Eä, the World that Is, created by Ilúvatar, and became Valar, they began to create Arda while Melkor was destroying or corrupting their work. Thus, the creation of Arda was more complex than the simple transformation in the Norse mythology. The similarity, however, relates to the shape of the world which was changed during the Spring of Arda, when Melkor destroyed the Two Lamps. The description of the world as it occurs after that change says that the west shores of Aman, the westernmost continent, "looked upon the Outer Sea, that is called by the Elves Ekkaia, encircling the Kingdom of Arda. How wide is that sea none know but the Valar; and beyond it are the Walls of the Night." (Tolkien, 1999, p. 30). As can be seen from the comparison of those descriptions, Arda as well as the world of Norse gods share the fact that the earth is encircled by the sea.

Aman, the mythical continent in the west of Arda, where the Valar, the Maiar, the Elves who accepted the Great Journey or some other beings who were given a privilege live, is also reminiscent of many myths of European mythologies. Many myths picture a beautiful

land which is situated in the west and where only welfare and peace exist. In *The Silmarillion*, Aman, or more specifically Valinor, the part of Aman where the Valar or the Elves live, is described as a beautiful land as well. There are a glorious city of Valimar, where the Valar dwell, beautiful cities of Alqualondë and Tirion, where the Elves live or the Gardens of Lórien, the most beautiful place in Valinor, where only peace and rest can be found, to name a few. Another important place for the comparison is Tol Eressëa, the island located to the east of Valinor, with its port Avallónë. The name of the city evokes the name of the mythical island from the Arthurian legends. According to *The History of the Kings of Britain*, one of the sources of the Arthurian legends written by Geoffrey of Monmouth at the beginning of the twelfth century, Avalon was an island where King Arthur was carried off to rest after the great battle during which he was mortally wounded. (Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1966, p. 261). That can be compared to the fact that after the War of Wrath when Morgoth was defeated, many Elves left for Tol Eressëa and later to Valinor to rest after the disasters which they had experienced in the Middle-earth. Valinor is also highly reminiscent of Elysium. According to Greek mythology, Elysium was a land of happiness at the end of the earth, which corresponds with the description of Aman. Furthermore, only those who were favoured by the gods and were given immortality were sent to Elysium. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013e). That fact highly resembles Valinor as only immortal Elves, who were loved by the Valar were allowed to enter the magnificent land of Aman. Taken into consideration all those facts, Aman is highly reminiscent of many blessed islands from various mythologies.

The nineteenth chapter of Quenta Silmarillion tells a story of Beren and Lúthien. As the evident resemblance to many European myths can be found throughout the whole story, the subsequent text will be devoted to detailed analysis of this story. The myths which are reflected in this tale are *Kilhwch and Olwen*, the old myth of the Welsh mythology, which was later attached to *The Mabinogion* by Lady Charlotte Guest, the myth about the Greek hero Orpheus and the part of the *Poetic Edda*, one of the sources of the Norse mythology, in which the chaining of the wolf Fenrir is described. As the story of Beren and Lúthien includes many elements of the mentioned myths, the story will be briefly described chronologically and those particular parts of the story will be emphasized and compared. As the knowledge of the context is important for the understanding of the story, the events leading to this story were already briefly described at the beginning of the chapter. Beren was the son of Barahir, the chief of the last Men of the House of Bëor who still remained in the land of Dorthonion even though it was already conquered by the Morgoth's forces after the Dagor Bragollach, the fourth of the great battles against Morgoth. After the treachery of one of their men, they were

all killed except of Barahir's son Beren, who had happened to be elsewhere at that time. After that he wandered for many years until he arrived in Doriath, the land of the Sindar, the Grey Elves. There he met Lúthien, the daughter of Thingol and Melian, dancing gracefully in the clearing. According to Coren, Tolkien himself acknowledged that this story was also inspired by his wife Edith, who danced for him so beautifully in a forest once that she appeared to him as ever young. That was reflected in his elf Lúthien. (Coren, 2002, p. 47). Moreover, this story was also reflected in Tolkien's real life at the end as names Lúthien and Beren appeared under actual names of his and his wife Edith on their headstone. (Coren, 2002, p. 126). Contemplating Lúthien, Beren immediately "fell into an enchantment, for she was the most beautiful of all the Children of Ilúvatar". (Tolkien, 1999, p. 193). The beginning of the story resembles the Welsh myth *Kilhwch and Olwen* as Kilhwch was also enchanted, however, in that case he was enchanted by his stepmother after he had refused to marry her daughter. She enchanted him that he would not "be suited with a wife until he obtains Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr.", the giant that lives in a faraway castle. (The Mabinogion: Kilhwch and Olwen, 2013). Both Lúthien and Olwen also share the fact that they are both beautiful and have very powerful fathers. Lúthien fell in love with Beren as well but when she brought him to her father Thingol, he did not approve as he perceived Men to be inferior mortal beings and he would kill Beren if he could. However, he assigned an impossible task to him: If he brings a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown in his hand to him, Lúthien may become his spouse. That scene almost precisely reflects the scene from *Kilhwch and Olwen*. When Kilhwch reached the castle of the giant Yspaddaden, the giant did not want him and his daughter Olwen to be wed as if she married, he would die. He tried to kill Kilhwch, thus he shares the attitude of Thingol towards Beren. However, finally he also decided to assign many impossible tasks to Kilhwch, which he constantly intensified, if he wanted to marry his daughter. (The Mabinogion: Kilhwch and Olwen, 2013). Concerning Beren, he left Doriath and headed to Nargothrond to ask the Elven king Finrod Felagund, who was saved by his father once, for a help. Bound by the oath, Finrod Felagund took the most loyal companions with him and together with Beren they left Nargothrond. That resembles the part of the tale of *Kilhwch and Olwen* when Kilhwch left for Cornwall to ask his cousin King Arthur for a help, he gathered the most loyal men and went with Kilhwch. (The Mabinogion: Kilhwch and Olwen, 2013). According to *The Silmarillion*, Beren, Finrod and their companions infiltrated the land of the Dark Lord, however, they were captured and imprisoned by Sauron, the servant of Morgoth. Meanwhile, Lúthien escaped from Doriath, got acquainted with Huan, the Valinor wolfhound belonging to Celegorm, one of Fëanor's sons, and Huan carried her to Sauron's fortress. They

saved Beren thanks to Lúthien's singing and Huan's strength but Finrod and his companions were slain. After some other events, Beren, Lúthien and Huan finally came to the Gates of Angband, the fortress of Morgoth. Angband was guarded by Morgoth's werewolf Carcharoth. Lúthien used the power which she inherited from her mother and put the werewolf to sleep. That ability and the situation can be compared to the ability of the Greek hero Orpheus and the situation in which he participated. Both he and Lúthien had extraordinary musical skills and, according to Encyclopædia Britannica, Orpheus managed to charm the dog Cerberus with his singing and playing while trying to get to the realm of Hades, who can be compared to Morgoth himself as stated in the paragraph about the Valar.[4] (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013f). After they entered the fortress, with her singing Lúthien even managed to charm Morgoth himself and put into slumber all his court making the resemblance to the deed of Orpheus even greater as he also managed to charm Hades, the king of the underworld, with his music and singing. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013f). Morgoth's crown fell down allowing Beren to cut off the Silmaril. After he possessed the Silmaril, they were fleeing from Angband, however, its gates were guarded by Carcharoth, who had already awoken. As Beren tried to drive him off raising his hand with the Silmaril, Carcharoth bit his hand off at the wrist. That scene resembles the chaining of the wolf Fenrir in the Norse mythology as it is written in the *Prose Edda*. The Norse gods learnt from the prophecy that the wolf Fenrir will cause a great disaster, therefore they decided to chain him. They tried to trick him into being tied in the shackles and tearing them to show how he was strong. However, he did not believe them and demanded someone's hand to be put into his mouth as a safeguard. Finally, the god Tyr offered himself. Therefore, Fenrir was chained, however, the god Tyr lost his hand. (Sturluson, 2003, p. 66). According to *The Silmarillion*, Carcharoth was burnt by the power of the Silmaril and fled. Lúthien cured Beren and they were carried by the great eagles to Doriath thereafter. Beren notified Thingol that his task was accomplished and the Silmaril was in his hand. Thingol was mollified and he approved their marriage. However, the enraged werewolf Carcharoth moved towards Doriath and destroyed everything in his way. Therefore, Beren, Thingol, Huan and some other Elves launched the Hunt for Carcharoth. In that hunt, Beren was slain. Moreover, Huan and Carcharoth killed each other. That part of the story returns to the inspiration of the Welsh myth *Kilhwch and Olwen* again. One of those impossible tasks which giant Yspaddaden assigned to Kilhwch was to hunt two boars, Yskithyrwyn and Twrch Trwyth, which is similar to the hunt for Carcharoth. The similarity is

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[4] Morgoth is referred to by his actual name Melkor in that paragraph.

even more intensified by the fact that Yskithyrwyn was slain by the King Arthur's own dog, Cavall, which resembles the Valinor dog Huan killing Carcharoth. (The Mabinogion: Kilhwch and Olwen, 2013). Moreover, the reflection of the myth about Orpheus returns one more time before the end. After Beren's death, Lúthien's spirit left for the Halls of Mandos and there Lúthien sang the most beautiful and the most mournful song. That can be compared to Orpheus singing the song and playing music to Hades, the lord of the underground, to be allowed to take his beloved Eurydice back to the world of living. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013f). Finally, the Valar offered Beren his life in exchange for Lúthien's immortality and she accepted, therefore she was the only of the Eldar, the Elves, who abandoned the world when her time came. The similarity between the tale of Beren and Lúthien and the Welsh myth *Kilhwch and Olwen* as well as the other myths was demonstrated on the comparison of the specific scenes from those myths. The comparison showed that the tale of Beren and Lúthien highly reflects the myth about Kilhwch and Olwen.

Nevertheless, there is another tale in *The Silmarillion* which reflects the story of one Finnish myth in almost every detail. It is the tale of Túrin Turambar, which chronologically almost follows the tale of Beren and Lúthien. After taking away the Silmaril from Morgoth, Nirnaeth Arnoediad, the fifth battle between Morgoth's forces and the alliance of Elves, Men and Dwarves took place. Húrin, the Lord of Dor-lómin and one of the few Men who ever saw Gondolin, the hidden city of the Elves, was captured by Morgoth. He knew that Húrin was a friend of Turgon, the King of Gondolin, therefore, he demanded information. Húrin refused and mocked Morgoth, thus, he cursed Húrin's offspring, which led to the tragic tale of his children, which highly resembles the tale of Kullervo from the Finnish epic *Kalevala* compiled by Elias Lönnrot. Túrin, Húrin's son, was sent by his mother to Thingol, the King of Doriath, to ensure his safety. She asked Thingol to take care of him as she was the distant relative of Beren, Thingol's son-in-law. Although Kullervo was not cursed, his actions and tragic end are exactly the same as the ones of Túrin. However, his childhood was a little bit different. According to the *Kalevala*, his family was, apparently, killed by his uncle, therefore, Kullervo was raised by him. Thus, both of the heroes share the childhood spent with some of their relative. (Lönnrot, 1999, p. 244–249). While he was living in Doriath as a foster son of Thingol, Túrin was to blame for a death of an elf which happened by mischance, therefore, he escaped and lived as an outlaw. On the other hand, Kullervo's uncle Untamo sold him to the blacksmither Ilmarinen, whose wife sent Kullervo to graze the herd of cows. She also gave him bread wherein stones were baked. While cutting the bread, Kullervo had broken his knife, the only remembrance of his lineage. That enraged him, thus, he procured the herd of wolves

and bears and let them tear apart Ilmarinen's wife. He left their house afterwards. (Lönnrot, 1999, p. 249–263). Although through different events, both Túrin and Kullervo ended up in the same situation as they were responsible for someone's death and ended up roaming the forest. In the comparison to the tale of Túrin Turambar, the tale of Kullervo is shorter, therefore many things happened to Túrin Turambar before his story returned to reflect the myth of Kullervo. To name a few, owing to the curse of Húrin's kin, Túrin caused the death of his friend Beleg or even the destruction of one of two hidden cities of the Elves, Nargothrond, and the death of the majority of its inhabitants by the army of orcs, who were led by the dragon Glaurung. Meanwhile, Túrin's mother Morwen escaped with her daughter Nienor from Dor-lómin and headed to Doriath. When they stepped before the king Thingol and Melian, Morwen and her daughter discovered that her son Túrin left Doriath a long time ago. Nevertheless, as Túrin fought with the dragon Glaurung, he was caught by his gaze forcing to believe what the dragon said. He urged Túrin to return to his homeland as, according to the dragon, his mother and sister are enslaved there. Túrin believed his words and left for Dor-lómin but found their house empty. However, in his rage he killed many Easterlings, the Men who served Morgoth, who took their land. That act resembles the part of the *Kalevala*, when Kullervo decided to go to Untamola, the place where he had grown up and where his uncle Untamo, the murderer of the majority of his family, dwelled. Similar to Túrin's actions, Kullervo also killed everyone of their kind. (Lönnrot, 1999, p. 272–277). After those mentioned deeds, Túrin settled in Brethil, became one of the local Woodmen and decided to forget his past deeds. However, the news concerning the destruction of Nargothrond and Túrin's deeds there spread even to Doriath. Therefore, his mother Morwen and his sister Nienor decided to seek Túrin. They came to Amon Ethir, the hill which was close to the ruins of Nargothord. Glaurung, who still sat there, dispersed them and he laid a spell of darkness and forgetfulness upon Nienor, therefore she could remember nothing and fled away. She fled to Brethil, where Túrin found her. Not knowing that they are siblings, they fell in love and subsequently, they even got married. From this point of the story, the basic elements of the tale of Túrin Turambar reflect the ones of the tale of Kullervo most evidently. According to the *Kalevala*, after Kullervo left Ilmarinen's house, he found out that his parents actually lived, however, his sister was lost and probably dead. After some time, he encountered her and seduced her. (Lönnrot, 1999, p. 268–270). Concerning Níniel, as Túrin and other Woodmen started to call Nienor because they did not know her name, she became pregnant. After some time, the dragon Glaurung came to Brethil but was ambushed and slain by Túrin. Túrin himself was poisoned and seemed dead. The slaying the dragon and

subsequent death of the hero can be seen in many myths. That can be exemplified by the tale of Beowulf, who managed to kill the dragon that came to destroy their lands. Túrin also killed the dragon Glaurung only after he came to threaten his land. Their success in killing the dragon also caused the death of both heroes, however, as opposed to Beowulf, who died of the mortal wounds, Túrin's death was caused indirectly by the fact that the death of the dragon broke the spell he casted on Nienor as is described later. (Donaldson, 2007, p. 67–75). Níniel found Túrin lying next to the dragon and tried to cure him, however, before his death Glaurung the Dragon said to her: "Hail, Nienor, daughter of Húrin. We meet again ere the end. I give thee joy that thou hast found thy brother at last. (...)" (Tolkien, 1999, p. 267). At the very moment Glaurung died, the spell was broken and Nienor remembered every day of her life again. She realised that she had married her own brother and had carried his own child and threw herself into the river Teiglin. According to the *Kalevala*, the same happened to Kullervo's sister as well. As she realised that she and Kullervo were siblings, she thew herself into the river. (Lönnrot, 1999, p. 270–271). When Túrin Turambar awoke and was told what had happened, he decided to take his own life at the place where Nienor took hers. He drew his sword and asked it whether it would slay him and the sword answered and agreed. That precise scene occurred also in the *Kalevala*. As Kullervo's sister died, he went to war. However, when he returned, he found the house of his family empty. Therefore, he came to the place where he met his sister for the first time, as opposed to Túrin, who took his life at the place where Nienor threw herself into the water, draw his sword and asked in the same way as Túrin asked. The sword answered and agreed also in the same way as Túrin's sword and Kúllervo ended his life. (Lönnrot, 1999, p. 277–278). As the similarity between those two tales is , it can be concluded that the tale of Kullervo highly inspired the tale of Túrin Túrambar and Niernor Níniel.

The last similarity between the specific myth of *The Silmarillion* and the specific myth of the European mythologies which will be described in this paper will concern the last event of *The Silmarillion*, excluding the chapter about the Rings of Power and the Third Age as that story is the main content of *The Lord of the Rings*, which is not part of this analysis. It is Akallabêth, the story of the downfall of the realm of Númenor, and it occurs at the end of this chapter because the description of the myths and its subsequent comparison with other myths of European mythologies is presented chronologically in terms of the story of *The Silmarillion*. Many elements of that story resemble the elements of the life and subsequent fall of Atlanteans and the fate of their island Atlantis as it is recorded in Plato's dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Critias*. After the defeat of Morgoth and the subsequent sinking of the whole

Beleriand, the region of the Middle-earth in which the story of Quenta Silmarillion takes place, during the War of Wrath, the Elves were forgiven and offered to return to Aman and the Men, who helped the Valar, were granted longer life and given a newly lifted island between the Middle-earth and Aman. It was named Númenor and a glimpse of Avallóne, the port city of Tol Erressëa, could be got from its shore or from a high mountain, which was situated at the centre of the island. Being Half-elves, the sons of Eärendil, Elrond and Elros, were given a choice of their own destiny. Elrond had chosen to remain with the Elves and stayed in the Middle-earth, however, Elros had chosen to be a king of Men, therefore, Valar appointed him the first king of the Númenóreans. They lived under the protection of the Valar and in a friendship with the Elves. Some of the Númenóreans even spoke Elven languages and wrote many books full of wisdom. They also became very capable craftsmen, however, they did not want to make weapons as they were the men of peace. They also became the best sailors that ever had been. The Númenóreans highly resemble the Atlanteans as they were described in *Critias*. As the Men were given Númenor by the Valar, the future Atlanteans were given Atlantis by Poseidon, the god of the sea. There was a high mountain in the centre of the island as well. The Atlanteans were also great craftsmen and lived in prosperity. (Plato, 2008, p. 98–103). Despite all their goodness, the Númenóreans were, however, forbidden to sail westward to Aman as it was only destined for the immortals. Therefore, they often sail eastwards and helped the people of the Middle-earth, however, after a few thousand years they desired wealth and dominion over the Middle-earth, thus they conquered many lands there. That attitude of Númenóreans is reminiscent of the attitude of the Atlanteans. According to *Timaeus*, the Atlanteans conquered many lands and were very successful and strong warriors. (Plato, 2008, p. 21). While Númenóreans were conquering the Middle-earth, Sauron ingratiated himself with them and convinced them that Ilúvatar is only an invention of the Valar and the actual creator's name is Melkor. They started to worship him and their bad deeds were even more intensified when Sauron convinced the twenty-fourth king of Númenor, Ar-Pharazôn, to invade Aman. The army of the Númenóreans reached the shores of Aman, however, Manwë called upon Ilúvatar and Ilúvatar "changed the fashion of the world; and a great chasm opened in the sea between Númenor and the Deathless Lands, and the waters flowed down into it (...)." (Tolkien, 1999, p. 334). Númenor fell into the chasm as well. That downfall is almost the precise version of Plato's legend about Atlantis. The Atlanteans became very corrupted as well and as a consequence, Atlantis was afflicted with earthquakes and floods and one day Atlantis collapsed into the sea and disappeared. (Plato, 2008, p. 21–22,

105–106). Taking into consideration all the above mentioned similarities, it can be concluded that the tale about the downfall of Númenor highly resembles Plato's legend about Atlantis.

J. R. R. Tolkien was obsessed with the mythologies of the ancient peoples, therefore, it is not surprising that his own fictional mythology follows the inherent rules of those mythologies. Undoubtedly, Tolkien wanted to put his artificial myths into the context of the mythologies of other countries because he wanted to create the mythology for England. He also acknowledged that he wanted the Valar to make an impression of the ancient gods as was mentioned before. Furthermore, many similar motives and elements of the European myths can be recognized in *The Silmarillion*. Those facts add a new dimension to the inspiration and potential influence as it accomplish Tolkien's intention to create the mythology for England because it fits in the context of other mythologies greatly as it reflects a lot of same motives and even stories of those mythologies but a with different setting and details.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to analyse certain tales of *The Silmarillion* by J. R. R. Tolkien which bears a resemblance to certain myths of the European mythologies. The paper dealt with the definition of important terms at the beginning, continued to the description of the time period in which Tolkien wrote and certain aspects of his life which affected his literary career. After that, the history of making *The Silmarillion* was described. Finally, the analysis regarding the comparison of certain aspects of Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* with certain aspects of the European mythologies was provided.

Before the actual analysis could be provided, certain terms had to be defined. It was the content of the first two chapters. The first chapter provided the definition of the term "myths" being the writings of certain tales from the past that were somehow important for the people in the past and are being considered classical tales nowadays. Then the chapter moved to definition of the term "mythology", which was being concluded for the purposes of this paper as a collection of particular myths. The second chapter dealt with the genre Mythopoia, by which the stories of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* are labelled. Mythopoeia was defined as "the making of myths".

After that, the analysis of certain aspects of Tolkien's life was necessary to better understand his perception of the things around him and potential inspiration for his works. Tolkien lived in the time of Modernism, however, he did not share so many Modernist opinions as he was very traditional. He also became a good friend of C. S. Lewis, they influenced each other and C. S. Lewis motivated Tolkien to publish his works. Tolkien also experienced many deaths of his family and his friends, which is reflected in his works. He was a devoted Catholic, therefore, his faith is reflected in his works as well. As a professor of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, Tolkien was obsessed with languages and created many of his own. Those artificial languages forced Tolkien to create his stories at the beginning. Tolkien also participated in many literary clubs, some of which he also founded. They were The Inklings, the most well-known and most important club for Tolkien's literary career, T. C. B. S., Coalbiters and many others. Thus, Tolkien's life highly inspired his pieces of work.

The final theoretical part of the paper, which had to be described before the actual analysis, concerned *The Silmarillion* and the history of its making. Tolkien was working on *The Silmarillion* his whole life and still did not manage to finish it. The problem was his

perfectionism as he kept re-writing and changing the story or the names of some characters or places as they were not etymologically appropriate. After his death, the responsibility for the finishing his works took over his son Christopher Tolkien, who managed to publish *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*, twelve-volume series *The History of Middle-earth* and *The Children of Húrin* to name only those works that are connected to stories of Arda, otherwise, there were many more titles.

Finally, the last and the longest part of the paper was the analysis of the specific elements of the tales of *The Silmarillion* which were similar to certain elements of the European mythologies. It was ascertained that many Valar, the Powers of Arda, are similar to many Greek or Norse gods in terms of their powers and character traits. However, Tolkien acknowledged that, even though they were intentionally inspired by those gods, they were only angelic beings, as the only omnipotent creator was Ilúvatar. The dwelling of Manwë and Varda, the highest peak of the Pelóri, Taniquetil, also resembles Mount Olympus of the Greek gods or Asgard of the Norse gods. Moreover, the fact that Arda is encircled by the sea is shared with the shape of the world in the Norse mythology. The land of Aman is also very similar to Avalon of Arthurian legends or Elysium, a land of happiness, according to the Greek mythology. Furthermore, there are two tales in *The Silmarillion* which highly resemble many other tales of different mythologies. The first of them is the tale of Beren and Lúthien, which shares many elements with the tale of Kilhwch and Olwen, the Welsh myth, the myth about the Greek hero Orpheus and the incident of the Norse god Tyr in *Poetic Edda*. The second story is the tale of Túrin Turambar, which highly resembles the tale of Kullervo in Finnish epic *Kalevala*. Túrin's fight with Glaurung is also similar to Beowulf's fight with the dragon. Finally, the last resemblance is between the life of Númenóreans and the downfall of their island Númenor and the life of Atlanteans and the destruction of their island Atlantis.

In conclusion, the all above mentioned examples only prove the fact that Tolkien was highly inspired by the European mythologies while he was working on his myths. He studied many different mythologies throughout his life, therefore, it is not surprising that those mythologies are reflected in his works, whether intentionally or not. Nevertheless, he desired to create the mythology so elaborated that he could dedicate it to his beloved country, England, and that wish came true.

7   RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou prvků různých evropských mytologií, které se určitým způsobem odrážejí v díle *Silmarillion* od J. R. R. Tolkiena. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř teoretických kapitol následovaných závěrečnou analytickou kapitolou, jelikož před samotnou analýzou bylo nezbytné definovat určité termíny a blíže představit analyzované dílo a jeho autora.

První kapitola definuje pojem „mýtus", tak jak k němu přistupují odborníci z různých odvětví, jelikož se jejich definice tohoto termínu velmi liší. Pojem „mýtus" je představován z pohledu etymologického, antropologického či náboženského. Je uvedena i definice tohoto pojmu, tak jak jej pojímal sám profesor Tolkien. Definice „mýtu" je následována definicí pojmu „mytologie", který etymologicky vychází z pojmu „mýtus". Jsou představeny tři možné způsoby nahlížení na význam tohoto termínu. Prvním z nich je prosté „vyprávění příběhů". V tomto významu tento termín používali staří Řekové a v dnešní době se už nepoužívá. Druhou možností je, že termín „mytologie" má význam „sbírky konkrétních mýtů a jejich obsah". V tomto významu tento termín požívá i tato práce. A poslední možností je, že termín „mytologie" může znamenat i „vědu o mýtech". V tomto významu ji používají hlavně badatelé, kteří se snaží mýty analyzovat a hledat v nich hlubší smysl.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá pojmem „mythopoeia", jelikož Tolkienovo dílo *Silmarillion* by se dalo zařadit do tohoto neobvyklého žánru. Tento pojem je etymologicky analyzován a dochází se k závěru, že termín „mythopoeia" znamená „vytváření mýtů", což plně odpovídá obsahu Tolkienova *Silmarillionu*, jelikož jeho obsahem je komplexně propracovaná fiktivní mytologie. Dále je představena jedna z Tolkienových básní, kterou právě pojmenoval Mythopoeia. Analýzou jejího obsahu se dochází k závěru, že popisuje právě Tolkienův přístup k vytváření mýtů.

Třetí kapitola zasazuje Tolkiena a jeho dílo do literárního kontextu. Popisuje, že v první polovině dvacátého století, kdy Tolkien napsal většinu svých děl, bylo období největšího rozkvětu modernismu. Tolkien ovšem přístup modernistů nesdílel, jelikož to byl velmi tradiční člověk a chronologicky posledním důležitějším anglickým spisovatelem byl pro něj Geoffrey Chaucer. Dále se kapitola zabývá konkrétními aspekty jeho života, které měly nějaký dopad na jeho literární kariéru. Představuje jeho přátelství s C. S. Lewisem a ilustruje na něm některé Tolkienovi povahové rysy. Také zdůrazňuje fakt, že jejich přátelství

s největší pravděpodobností ovlivnilo konečné vydání obou jejich stěžejních děl. Poté se jsou postupně rozebírány ony konkrétní aspekty Tolkienova života. Prvním z nich je jeho vnímání smrti, jelikož té byl jeho život plný již od útlého dětství a jeho díla tuto skutečnost velmi odrážejí. Dále rozebírá jeho katolickou víru, které také jistě určitým způsobem ovlivnila jeho díla. Poté je představena Tolkienova láska k jazykům prokázána neskutečným počtem jazyků, které sám uměl a další spoustou umělých jazyků, které sám vytvořil. Tyto umělé jazyky také stále za počátkem jeho literární kariéry. Dále jsou představena mnohá literární uskupení, kterých byl Tolkien členem a která měla jistě také velký vliv na jeho literární kariéru. Nakonec jsou jen ve stručnosti zmíněny jeho největší profesní úspěchy.

Čtvrtá kapitola se již konkrétně zabývá jedním z Tolkienových nejpropracovanějších děl, *Silmarillionem*. Popisuje historii vzniku *Silmarillionu*, která je velmi odlišná od jeho ostatních děl, a Tolkienův prvotní záměr. Tolkien na *Silmarillionu* pracoval po celý jeho život, od jeho studijních let až do smrti, a přesto se mu nepodařilo ho za jeho života vydat. Tento fakt byl mimo jiné zapříčiněn Tolkienovým perfekcionalismem, jelikož poté, co dílo dokončil, začal opět určité části upravovat a přepisovat, čímž se dostal do stavu, kdy musel upravovat i ostatní části, a proto závěrečné verze nikdy nedosáhl. Jeho sen mu splnil až jeho syn Christopher Tolkien, jenž po otcově smrti vydal *Silmarillion*, *Nedokončené příběhy Númenoru a Středozemě*, dvanácti svazkovou *The History of Middle-earth*, která obsahuje Tolkienovy starší verze určitých příběhů a další detaily, které rozšiřují svět Tolkienovy Ardy, doplněné Christopherovými komentáři, a nakonec v roce 2007 vydal ještě *Húrinovy děti*. Děl, kterých Christopher vydal po otcově smrti bylo ovšem mnohem víc, ale uvedený výčet obsahuje pouze díla, která se vztahují k Tolkienovu fiktivnímu světu Arda, ve kterém se odehrává *Silmarillion* a další jeho známá díla. Kapitola také zmiňuje Tolkienův prvotní záměr pro napsání takovýchto příběhů, který zapříčinil jeho velký zármutek po tom, že se Anglii, jeho zemi, nedochovaly žádné starověké mýty, které by se daly přirovnat k rozsáhlým řeckým či severským mytologiím a tak se rozhodl takovou mytologii sepsat sám.

Pátá a také nejdelší kapitola se již věnuje samotné analýze Tolkienova *Silmarillionu* a porovnává určité elementy jeho příběhů a mýtů s konkrétními elementy evropských mytologií, porovnává je a popisuje konečnou podobnost. Zjišťuje že Valar, Mocnosti Ardy, se v mnoha případech podobají řeckým a severským bohům, co se týče jejich schopností, nadvlády nad určitými přírodními elementy a povahových rysů. Určitou podobnost také sdílí sídlo největších Valar, Taniquetil, které je umístěno na nejvyšším bodu pohoří Pelóri a sídla řeckých bohů na hoře Olymp a severských bohů na Asgardu. Další podobností je podoba světa Ardy, který je celý obklopen mořem, stejně jako podoba světa podle severské mytologie,

kde je svět také celý obklopen mořem. Velmi podobnými jsou také kontinent Aman, který sdílí prvky země zaslíbené s Avalonem z Artušovských mýtů či Elysiem z řecké mytologie. Poté je analýza prováděna na některých konkrétních příbězích ze *Silmarillionu*, jelikož se v nich silně odráží konkrétní mýty z různých evropských mytologií. Prvním z těchto příběhů je vyprávění o Berenovi a Lúthien, které sdílí spoustu prvků s velšským mýtem o Kilhwchovi a Olwen, mýtem o řeckém hrdinovi Orfeovi a nakonec také příhodou severského boha Týa při svazování vlka Fenriho popsané v *Prozaické Eddě*, jednom z nejdůležitějších zdrojů severské mytologie. Druhým příběhem, který sdílí spoustu prvků s dalšími mýty, je vyprávění o Túrinu Turambarovi. Velmi silně se v něm odráží pověst o Kullervovi z finského eposu *Kalevala* a Túrinův boj s drakem Glaurungem se dá přirovnat k boji Beowulfa s drakem. Poslední analyzovanou podobností je život národa Númenorejců a následná zkáza jejich ostrovní říše Númenoru a život národa Atlanťanů a následné potopení jejich ostrova Atlantidy.

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