Christian Elements in Lord of the Rings and Beowulf

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Znanstveno područje humnističke znanosti, polje filologija, grana anglistika

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ABSTRACT

Although they are very different in many aspects, *Beowulf* and The Lord of the Rings are two famous works influenced by the same subject – the Christianity. They both have Christ-like characters. The hero Beowulf is more a combination of Christ's characteristics and certain traits of the Old Testament saviours. In *The Lord of the Rings* there is no true Christ figure, but there are three main characters that shadow the life and teachings of Jesus. One can also observe a certain type of followers representing devoted disciples or even true Christians. On the other hand, there are certain monsters and characters that represent the evil or Satan. In *Beowulf* there are three monsters that are the enemies of the hero. They kill and destroy everyone and everything in their paths. The hero was sent by God and needs to stop them. In *The Lord of the Rings* evil is not only represented by monsters but by humans and a Hobbit that are under the influence of the One Ring. All antagonists are connected to it and all of them want it for themselves. The ring represents the sin. That sin in Tolkien's world corrupts all that is created. It turns a Hobbit into Gollum. Just like any other sin it brings destruction and misery. Evil is incapable of creation; it only corrupts what is already there. That can be observed in the creation of orcs and trolls who were actually elves and ents before they got corrupted by the evil. Both authors shadowed the Bible in their works. They either retell it like in the case of Cain, the Flood, or in the case of angels' and Adam and Eve's fall, or they shadow it like in the case of great battles, people's behaviour, prayers and Hrothgar's sermon. The anonymous author and Tolkien were true Christian believers and both of them infused many Christian themes into their works.

Key words: Jesus Christ, Christianity, *Beowulf*, *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo, Gandalf, Aragorn, Satan, Grendel.

INTRODUCTION

Beowulf and *The Lord of the Rings* do not seem to have a lot in common except a fantastic story of extraordinary characters that fight for good. These two works do not belong to the same literary genre and are not written in the same era. *Beowulf*, an epic poem whose author is an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet, was written some time between the eighth and the early eleventh century, while *The Lord of the Rings* is a high-fantasy novel written by English author J. R. R. Tolkien in stages between 1937 and 1949. However, some authors claim that there is obvious *Beowulf's* influence on Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (Shippey 154).

Despite the differences, there is one significant connection between the two works – numerous Christian elements that permeate both of them. Both works share important similarities such as influences in plot and structure and similarities between monsters – particularly the influence of Grendel on Gollum (Nelson 1). In both works "legend and history have met and fused" (Wilkinson 83). Even though it has been claimed that *Beowulf* "is a survival from the heathen age that came to be marred by monkish interpolations" (Niles 137), "nowhere in Old English literature is the fusion of Germanic and Christian lore brought to more effective literary form than in *Beowulf*" (Niles 137). Birzer claims that Tolkien and the poet of *Beowulf* both shadowed Clement's and Augustine's guidance – adopting the best characteristics of a pagan culture and consecrating it into a Christian culture. It can be assumed that both authors believed that the sanctification of the pagan was a crucial Christian mission (36).

As for *The Lord of the Rings*, even Tolkien himself admitted that God was present in his works: "Of course God is in *The Lord of the Rings*. The period was pre-Christian, but it was a monotheistic world" (qtd. in Birzer 45). When he was asked which God was the God in his books, he replied: "The one, of course! The book is about the world that God created—the actual world of this planet" (qtd. in Birzer 45). Tolkien was an old-fashioned Catholic and devoted to the sacraments. He believed that God answered prayers and healed sicknesses (Birzer 46). Tolkien "was trying to write an account that would be complementary to, while not contradicting, the Genesis story" (Hart 42-43).

There are many Christian elements in *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings* intentionally used by both authors. The first chapter shows the link between the Bible and these two works and it attempts to prove that the Bible is at the core of the two. The second chapter of the paper deals with Christ-like characters found in *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings*, while the third chapter

deals with the opposite – the main antagonists and their link to Satan. The last chapter shows how the evil operates in these works; it cannot create anything; it can just corrupt what is already made by God.

1. THE BIBLE AS THE CORE OF *BEOWULF* AND *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

Many similarities to the stories of the Bible can be found in both, *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings*: "In many ways the most imaginative response to the Old Testament is to be seen in *Beowulf*, which draws on biblical stories of creation, of Cain and the giants to form part of its mythic structure" (Godden 207). Orchard writes that "the range of biblical reference in *Beowulf* may not be wide, it may be deep" (*A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 142).

The first reference to the Old Testament is mentioned almost at the beginning of the poem when the poet mentions Grendel for the first time. Immediately after Grendel's introduction follows the story of Cain. Godden believes that the correlation of the song and the monster obliged the poet to tell the story of Cain – he brought death and violence into the world and thus became the progenitor of all evil beings (goblins, orcs, giants, dragons and others). Story of Cain also introduces the concept of fratricide and produces the example of the strife between tribes and families that entered the world of *Beowulf*. The myth of Cain manages to maintain the nature of Grendel and all that he stands for and to allude to the origins of conflict among brothers. The hint about the Old Testament has a complementary function when it returns again after deaths of Grendel and his mother. Beowulf brings the sword's hilt and on it there is the story of the Flood that destroyed the giants. Just like Grendel is introduced by the Old Testament legend that describes the origin of the monsters, his death alludes to the biblical story of their extermination (Godden 216). To quote Godden: "Old Testament allusion is here used to suggest the satanic aspects of Grendel and the Edenic aspects of Heorot" (Godden 215).

In *Critical Companion to Beowulf* Orchard gives us many references to the Bible and mentions many biblical allusions in connection to Grendel. Besides the parallel between Grendel and Cain, there is also a parallel between Grendel and Satan. In the Song of Creation there is allusion to Satan and his fall. Satan wanted to destroy the Garden of Eden just like Grendel tried to destroy Heorot (138-139). Reference to "feet and hands" comes from the story of wicked Jezebel and how the dogs that ate her did not touch her feet and hands. Grendel's drinking of blood breaks God's ban of consumption of flesh with blood (141). There is Grendel's connection to the Old Testament monsters, but there is also another link to the Old Testament. It is the significance of the number thirty. Grendel snatches thirty thanes from Heorot and Beowulf has strength of thirty men in his hand. This is in direct connection to Samson who killed a lion with his bare hands and

had to kill thirty men and return with their garments (145). Beheading of Grendel is similar to the beheading of Nicanor, who was a persecutor of the Jews (145-146).

Just like Grendel acts like an Old Testament monster, the other characters of the poem behave like the characters of the Old Testament. According to Muri, the order in the world could only be achieved by the sword and in this pagan world there was no place for a saint-king. Were Hrothgar and Beowulf similar to New Testament saints, the story would be completely different. The Geats and the Danes would probably be portrayed as sacrificial lambs (26). Tolkien suggests that the poet that wrote *Beowulf* attempts to portray pre-Christian days. Trying to emphasize their nobility and desire to do good, he naturally delineated the king of Heorot to the Old Testament. The Danes actually copy in a certain sense the shepherd patriarch and kings of Israel, servants of the one God who believed that all good things in their lives were gifts of God's mercy. There was actually a Christian conception of the noble English ruler before Christianity, who could transgress "in times of temptation into idolatry" (Tolkien, "The Monsters and the Critics", 27).

Even though the Danes are heathens they are similar to many nations of the Old Testament – to the old Israelites in the time of Moses that lost their way or even to other barbarian tribes who were pagans and knew nothing of God. They live in ignorance and try to survive in the world filled with dangers:

> Sometimes at pagan shrines they vowed
>
> Offerings to idols, swore oaths
>
> That the killer of souls might come to their aid
>
> And save the people. That was their way,
>
> Their heathenish hope; deep in their hearts
>
> They remembered hell. The Almighty Judge
>
> Of good deeds and bad, the Lord God,
>
> Head of the Heavens and High King of the World,
>
> Was unknown to them. (*Beowulf*, 175-183).

From this passage it can be seen how the Danes lived. They are very similar to unbelievers in the Bible. They have their way of life and God is unknown to them. This very much resembles the way the Israelites behaved in the desert. When Moses went to speak to God and to receive the Ten Commandments, the people of Israel abandoned the teachings of Moses and started to worship idols. Beowulf as Moses came and changed their heathen way of life and brought the one God in their life. Irving Jr. writes that even though one understands that the Danes were pagans before and also after this event, we actually never see them engaging in genuine worship. Pagan gods were never mentioned anywhere and there was no explicit mention of anything truly pagan (122). Bloom thinks that the poet describes them as non-Christians but their religion, although earlier appealed to heathen gods, very much resembles the monotheism of the Old Testament. They are more similar to Jewish religion than to Scandinavians of the Early Middle Ages (*Bloom's Guides: Beowulf,* 15).

Not only is the poem based on the stories of the Old Testament, but the manner of behaviour is quite similar too. It copies the teachings and the moral consequences of the Old Testament. Good is always rewarded and evil is punished; there is no place for pity and mercy.

> Oh, cursed is he
>
> Who in time of trouble has to thrust his soul
>
> In the fire's embrace, forfeiting help;
>
> He has nowhere to turn. But blessed is he
>
> Who after death can approach the Lord
>
> And find friendship in the Father's embrace. (*Beowulf*, 183-188)

All characters are one-dimensional – they are all either good or bad. If one sins that person will be judged and punished which is very much like in the Old Testament. For one's actions at the end of one's life they are either rewarded by the Father or cursed with the fire. Beowulf and his companions are good and behave accordingly. On the other hand monsters are always evil and they have no good traits at all. They never feel sorrow for their actions. "Grendel is nevertheless the embodiment of radical evil; and if one pities him in his misery, such sympathies are misplaced" (Nelson 9).

In *Beowulf* free will is not as pronounced as it is in *The Lord of the Rings*. There are several instances where everything is in the hands of God and people cannot do anything about it: "Fate goes ever as fate must" (*Beowulf*, 455), "What God judged right would rule what happened / To every man, as it does to this day" (*Beowulf*, 2858-2859), "He who wields power / Over time and tide: He is the true Lord" (*Beowulf*, 1610-1611), "yet God who ordains / Who wins or loses" (*Beowulf*, 2874-2875), "But the Lord of Men allowed me to behold / For He often helps the unbefriended" (*Beowulf*, 1661-1662). Reading these lines it can be seen that God holds everything in his hands and no one can escape his will. According to this, people do not have true free will because God always has the last say. People could only follow the rules and hope for the best. Even monsters are allowed to live only because of the God's will: "it was widely understood / That as long as God disallowed it, / The fiend could not bear them to his shadow-bourne" (*Beowulf*, 706-708). That is very similar to what people in the Old Testament believe and what many Christians believe today.

Since God is the one that allows monsters to live, their function in the story is to test humans. He lets them wreak havoc only to show human kind that they need God in their lives. The monsters are also the warning to people of what they can turn into if they continue to sin. That monsters are the punishment to those that do not follow God's laws can be seen in Hrothgar's words: "God can easily / Halt these raids and harrowing attacks!" (*Beowulf*, 478-479).

Thus everything in the poem associates to the Old Testament: the people and the way they live, God that is more engaged in the wars than a merciful God, etc. Besides all these allusions to the Old Testament, there are also several references from the New Testament. There are references that link Beowulf to Jesus, thus Hrotghar's praise of Beowulf's mother is in correlation to a woman who praised and blessed the womb that gave birth to Jesus and breasts that fed him (Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 147). Ninth hour was the time Christ's Passion happened just like the time when Beowulf fights Grendel. The blood in both instances made men lose the courage (Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 148). Beowulf goes to fight the dragon with twelve retainers and one of them is a thief. This is very similar to Jesus with his twelve disciples, which especially alludes to the last night before Christ's agony (Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 148). At the end of the poem Beowulf is no longer compared to Jesus, but he is more similar to Samson. When Samson was an old man he had a reputation for disposing monsters. The fight against the dragon was just one of the parallels: the dragon laid destruction on the land, the isolated mountain with fire and smoke, the journey to the cave led by a guide, the moral concerns, the old age of the hero, the role of the companions and their attempt

to persuade the hero against fighting the dragon, their procession to the cave, the terrified reaction, loyalty of a companion (Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 150-151). Even though both the Old and New Testament influenced *Beowulf*, Irving Jr. concludes that the Christianity in *Beowulf* is in a sense limited. It is not primitive but rather it is either deliberately or unconsciously tailored to fit the dimensions of heroic poetry. God is not related with prayers, angels, saint, miracles or even Jesus Christ. He is rather the great and austere King of Heaven who is in constant war against forces of evil – trolls and demons. Beowulf and his heroic strength are just God's tools to wage that war. A moral objective of the poem is to protect the human world that God created but the instruments are not so much spiritual as they are physical. The existence of the monotheistic God is truly felt in the poem and we can acknowledge his presence even today (131).

Whereas both works, *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings,* contain elements of Christianity, they differ a lot in the way they do it. While *Beowulf* is based more on the Old Testament, *The Lord of the Rings* resonates the New Testament.

The mere beginning of the fellowship's adventure starts on the most important date in the New Testament – Christ's birthday: "The Fellowship set out from Rivendell on December 25th, and Frodo reaches Mount Doom and the One Ring is cast down by Gollum on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation" (Gushurst-Moore 13). The strongest character of the fellowship is Frodo, who is actually physically the weakest. Tolkien thus says: "This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere." (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 351). In his words one can recognize the teaching of the Catholic Church: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6, NKJV)" (Bruner and Ware 10). Enright claims that apparent weakness that wins over physical strength comes from Christian values and that defeating evil comes through spiritual and not physical force (qtd. in Gushurst-Moore 21).

The small fellowship is sent to fight the great evil, and on that long journey many misfortunes happen to them. When they are in danger, the characters often say something like prayers to "saints" (Elbereth, Gilthoniel and Galadriel). When Frodo is in need Elrond performs a miracle and causes the river to assault the Ringwraiths. Glorfindel appears as a shining figure from "the other side" – the Blessed Realm and thus associates to an angel. While Elbereth, Gilthoniel and Galadriel can be seen as "saints", Sauron and Ringwraith copy the "principalities", "powers" and

"the rulers of the darkness of this world" of Ephesians 6:12 (Kilby 139). Prayer is mentioned many times in the book; for example before "they ate, Faramir and all his men turned and faced west in a moment of silence" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 884). Frodo calls for Elbereth when he fights against Ringwraiths and Sam does the same thing while fighting Shelob – just "as a Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox believer would invoke the name of a saint" (Birzer 61).

According to Drout, in the Tolkien's work there is also the equivalent of the Eucharist. The Elvish lembas is a mythological version of it. The translation of the word is "journey bread" and "lifebread". In the Catholic mass the Body of Christ is referred to as the "bread of life" but it is also the last sacrament that a Catholic receives before dying. The Eucharist is also known as the Viatieum or "food for the journey" (127).

The main protagonists are often helped by elves or by Gandalf, but in some parts of the books it seems as some mysterious help comes out of nowhere. Tolkien uses *deus ex machina* in several instances, and it can be interpreted as if the main protagonists are helped by God. The example of it can be seen in the part of the story when Frodo and Sam are saved by the eagles. Not only does Tolkien use *deus ex machina*, but this event also alludes to the story of Exodus 19:4 where God says to Moses: "Have you seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself?" (Kilby 140). Speaking of the Egyptians and their destruction that is retold in Exodus, one has to mention another allusion to that. Drout compares the battle of Israelites and the Egyptians that is mentioned in the Exodus to the battle of good and evil forces in *The Lord of the Rings*. Just like the Israelites, the army in *The Lord of the Rings* that represents the good gets caught between a natural barrier and their enemies. While the Israelites are stopped by the Red Sea, the army of *The Lord of the Rings* is stopped by the mountains of the Hornburg (Battle of Helm's Deep – in this battle Rohan fights Saruman) and by the mountains behind Minas Tirith (Battle of Minas Tirith – the battle for Gondor). Both armies (in Exodus and in *The Lord of the Rings*) have powerful and martial figures. They are sent by the divine to speak of hope and to open the way to victory. In each case the army fears that they are doomed, until Moses and Gandalf encourage them and tell them not to despair. The evil forces in both, in Exodus and in *The Lord of the Rings*, are destroyed in the similar way. The power of the water that crushes the Ringwraiths is a reminiscent to the destruction of pharaoh's army in the Exodus (211).

While the Battle of Minas Tirith is going on, Frodo and Sam set out across Mordor. Mordor is filled with monsters and slaves; rivers have foul smell and taste as if they are poisoned and the

land is bleak: “The traditional description of Hell in Christian mythology is a place of fire, ash, and suffering… The same theme of barren desolation and fire is how Mordor is described” (Drout 307). Drout describes hell as the home of the devils. According to Christian beliefs, devils were angels who were corrupted by their pride and they rebelled against God. For that sin they were cast down from Heaven to burn in Hell. Similar to them are the Orcs that live in Mordor. They were Elves corrupted by Sauron. Sauron as the Lord of Mordor alludes to Satan as the Lord of Hell. Both are not permanently active and both used intermediaries for they work (307). Tolkien even slightly altered Dante’s quote from the *Divine Comedy* in the line: “Those who pass the gates of Barad-dur do not return” (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 386) meaning that there is no hope for anyone who enters that world.

While Mordor represents hell, there is also heaven in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Lothlorien, the fairest realm of the Elves remaining in Middle-earth during the Third Age, represents heaven: “Lothlorien is a land that does "not fade or change or fall into forgetfulness," kept by a "secret power that holds evil" from it” (Hein 202). It truly represents the Garden of Eden – it is well hidden and no evil can ever enter it. Thus, both heaven and hell, are represented in the work.

When Frodo gets to Mordor to destroy the ring, he is overcome by ring, but suddenly Gollum appears and fights with Frodo to get the ring. In this fight both Gollum and ring are destroyed when Gollum snatches the ring and falls with it in the fire. Birzer thinks that God demonstrates his rule and love through Gollum. Although fight against evil is necessary the command to not kill resonates trough Gandalf’s words. Faramir also shows mercy. Not only he does not harm hobbits but he does not harm Gollum either. His actions are best described by his own words: “But I do not slay man or beast needlessly, and not gladly even when it is needed” (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 869). Mercy is not only for wretched creatures like Gollum or unknown travellers, but also for defeated enemies. Frodo thinks that “it is useless to meet revenge with revenge: it will heal nothing” (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 1335). At the end of his adventures he does not want to kill Saruman. He does not want to take revenge for all dead humans and hobbits. In his mind an eye for an eye resolves nothing. Wood believes that we can only make friends with the people who hold same convictions. On the other hand Christians are called to show pity even to those we do not trust and particularly to our enemies. It is no wonder that Sam ends his discourse by proposing that even the dark-side of every living being finds its surprising place in the One story – because even a Gollum may be good in a tale (“Tolkien’s Augustinian Understanding of Good and Evil” 102).

When Gollum accidentally falls into the fire, taking the Ring with him, Frodo's mission is completed. Frodo, however, remains wounded in body and spirit after carrying such an oppressive weight as the One Ring. When Arwen settles down with Aragorn as Queen of Gondor, she gives Frodo a white gem. This gem is like the Phial of Galadriel but less powerful; it glows with comfort rather than light. Frodo holds it whenever his dreams and memories of Mordor get too strong. Arwen's gem hangs around Frodo's neck where the Ring used to hang. She tells Frodo:

> "But wear this now in memory of Elfstone and Evenstar with whom your life has been woven!" And she took a white gem like a star that lay upon her breast hanging upon a silver chain, and she set a chain about Frodo's neck. "When the memory of the fear and the darkness troubles you," she said, "this will bring you aid." (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 1276)

Beyond giving Frodo comfort, Arwen's gem is proof of Arwen's offer to Frodo to take her place on the elf ships sailing away from Middle-earth to the West. It is not by accident that Tolkien copies that account when Arwen takes a white gem and gives it to Frodo, which is a symbol of the Blessed Realm. This can be interpreted as an allusion to the Revelation 2:17: “To him that overcometh will I give [...] a white stone, and in the stone a new name written.” Even the very ending of the adventure when Frodo and Gladriel travel west – “until at last on a night of rain Frodo smelled a sweet fragrance on the air and heard the sound of singing that came over the water. And then it seemed to him that [...] the grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise” (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 1348). Kilby believes that the holy at the end reaches Frodo who even though considered himself unworthy for the quest nonetheless follows the Grail (140).

2. CHRIST-LIKE FIGURES

The main characters of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Beowulf* share personality traits that one can find in Jesus, but the hero Beowulf is more similar to the saviours in the Old Testament.

1.1 Beowulf as a saviour

Beowulf, the main character of the poem, is a hero of the Geats who comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, whose mead hall Heorot has been under attack by a monster known as Grendel. The Danes are in need of a saviour and Beowulf is the only one who could help them. "There was no one else like him alive" (*Beowulf*, 196) and he was "the mightiest man on earth, high-born and powerful" (*Beowulf*, 197-198).

There are many critics who compare Beowulf to Jesus: "Friedrich Klaeber can identify in Beowulf a type of Christ" (Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 131) and Barry believes that Beowulf "is an allegory to Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus came to the Israelites to save them from eternal destruction by the devil through sin and evil, so Beowulf comes to the Danes" (2). "Jesus and Beowulf each fight an evil that is too great to be defeated by the people. Each hero is prepared to sacrifice his life in order to gain salvation for the people to whom God has sent him" (2-3).

Beowulf is a saviour and he comes to save people from evil and he even dies in the process, but there are more common traits between him and the saviours of the Old Testament than with Jesus. He is thus more similar to Moses than to Jesus Christ. Wieland believes that "Beowulf should be viewed in the same light as an Old Testament figure, possibly as a shadow, or typos of Christ" (qtd. in Muri 11). Like any other saviour from the Old Testament, Beowulf did not die in vain. He sacrificed his life to save others. That is exactly what any saviour from the Bible would strive to do. To give one's own life unselfishly to save others is one of the main teachings of Christianity. Williams writes that Beowulf through "exceptional moral tenacity in upholding the values of kinship and peace suggested that he was the ideal Christian knight and king". He fights against the "forces of destruction" personified in the monsters (70). Niles also writes that Beowulf is not portrayed as a "muscled sword-slinger" but rather as a "selfless" and "dignified king". His dominant trait is "power held in abeyance" which recalled "the character of a Christian Saviour" (138).

Just before fighting Grendel Beowulf "placed complete trust / In his strength of limb and the Lord's favour" (*Beowulf*, 669-670). Beowulf here seems very pious; he does not use armour or his sword to fight Grendel. He relies on his strength and help of God to destroy evil. One can argue that Beowulf is full of pride and that his ego is overwhelming. In his speech one can see that he puts his faith in God: "And may the Divine Lord / In His wisdom grant the glory of victory / To whichever side He sees fit" (685-687). Even his "confidence proceeds from his faith that all power is God-given, and consequently that God's will is unalterable" (Muri 18). This puts Beowulf in a different light. He is not described as a pagan Germanic warrior; he is confident but not vain. It is as if Beowulf is saying a prayer, invoking God to help him defeat evil. Thus, "Beowulf, for all that he moves in the world of the primitive Heroic Age of the Germans, nevertheless is almost a Christian knight" (Tolkien, "The Monsters and the Critics", 20). Beowulf's faith is also shown in his old age. In his last speech he gives thanks to the God:

> To the everlasting Lord of All,
>
> To the King of Glory, I give thanks
>
> That I behold this treasure here in front of me,
>
> That I have been allowed to leave my people
>
> So well endowed on the day I die. (2794-2798)

This can easily be interpreted as an allusion to Moses' death. Moses saw the Promised Land, but he was not allowed to enter it and died before he could do it. In the same fashion Beowulf is allowed to see the treasure but is not allowed to know what happened to it or to his people. Beowulf is not only like Moses, but he has some similarities with other saviours from the Old Testament. Orchard writes of twelve similarities between Beowulf's fight with Grendel and David's with Goliath:

> 1. King Hrothgar suffers the depredations of the giant Grendel (*Beowulf*, lines 115–93)
> King Saul suffers the depredations of the giant Goliath (I Samuel XVII.3 and 23)
> 2. King Hrothgar offers a rich reward for killing Grendel (*Beowulf*, lines 384–5 and

660b–661)

King Saul offers a rich reward for killing Goliath (I Samuel XVII.25)

3. Beowulf appears from elsewhere, a promising youth (*Beowulf*, lines 247–51)

David appears from elsewhere, a promising youth (I Samuel XVI.12 and XVII.20)

4. Early in his career, Beowulf had seemed of little worth (*Beowulf*, lines 2183b–2188a)

Early in his career, David had seemed of little worth (I Samuel XVI.11 and XVII.15)

5. Beowulf's credentials as a suitable combatant are challenged (*Beowulf*, lines 506–28)

David's credentials as a suitable combatant are challenged (I Samuel XVII.28 and 33)

6. Beowulf lists his previous experience tackling similarly frightening creatures (*Beowulf*, lines 530–606)

David lists his experience tackling similarly frightening creatures (I Samuel XVII.35–7)

7. Beowulf is seen as heaven-sent, so his offer of help is accepted (*Beowulf*, lines 381b–384a)

David is seen as heaven-sent, so his offer of help is accepted (I Samuel XVII.37)

8. Beowulf removes helmet, breastplate, and sword before the battle (*Beowulf*, lines 669–74)

David removes helmet, breastplate, and sword before the battle (I Samuel XVII.39)

9. Beowulf boasts of victory, with God's help (*Beowulf*, lines 677–87)

David boasts of victory, with God's help (I Samuel XVII.46)

10. Beowulf battles Grendel alone, and without a sword (*Beowulf*, lines 710–836)

David battles Goliath alone, and without a sword (I Samuel XVII.39, 42, and 50)

11. Beowulf decapitates Grendel with Grendel's [mother's?] sword (*Beowulf*, lines 1584b–1590)

David decapitates Goliath with Goliath's own sword (I Samuel XVII.51)

12. Beowulf returns with the sword and the head of Grendel (*Beowulf*, lines 1612–17)

David returns with the sword and the head of Goliath (I Samuel XVII.54) (*A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 144)

Another thing that connects Beowulf to Jesus is his mild and generous nature. He is described as a generous and mild ruler. Richards writes that the word "mild" was always connected to Christ, an angel or even a saint. She believes that to be mild means to be a great Christian or even a "candidate for sainthood" (qtd. in "Psychology and Physicality", 225). Orchard notes that the word mild is "frequent occurrence in Christian contexts, being used to describe, amongst others, Christ, Saint Neot, Bishop Eata, and the Archangel Gabriel" ("Psychology and Physicality", 111).

Even though Beowulf has many positive traits, he is still not sinless like Jesus. Goldsmith accuses him "of two deadly sins, pride in recklessly volunteering to fight the dragon alone and cupidity in longing for the dragon's treasure" (qtd. in "Christian and Pagan Elements", 128). Those sins show us that he is a mere human, too, but a human capable of great things and sacrifice.

1.2 Christ's characteristics in *The Lord of the Rings*

As a devout Catholic, Tolkien did not want to make one true Christ character. He probably believed that there was only one Jesus Christ and he was not worthy to copy him. He maybe thought that it would have tarnished the name of Jesus. Drout also understands that there is no true Christ figure in *The Lord of the Rings* but there is "something of Christ" in several characters (655). Gandalf resembles Jesus in death, resurrection and transfiguration and Aragorn resembles Christ as a king and healer but also with the power to rule over the dead (138). "One may find God in the plot itself. Indeed, the elements of true Christian heroism are severally represented in the four major characters of *The Lord of the Rings*: Gandalf, the prophet; Aragorn, the king; Frodo, the priest; and Sam, the common man and servant" (Brizer 69).

Frodo is the ring-bearer. It is up to him to carry the ring and destroy it. Tolkien gives us the best explanation of Frodo and his incentive:

> Frodo undertook his quest out of love—to save the world he knew from disaster at his own expense, if he could; and also in complete humility, acknowledging that he was wholly inadequate to the task. His real contract was only to do what he could, to try to find a way, and to go as far on the road as his strength of mind and body allowed. He did that. (Letters 327) (qtd. in Ruud 282-283)

Because of his character which is the "combination of courage, selflessness and fidelity", Drout believes that Frodo was the most ideal bearer of the ring (265).

Gushurst-Moore finds a similarity between Frodo's acceptance and Jesus in the Gospel of Luke: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. In this, Frodo symbolises Christ's humanity as well as courage above and beyond himself" (14). With the words: "I will take the Ring" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 352), Frodo accepts his mission and from that point the greatest sin falls on his shoulders. Carrying the ring on a chain around his neck can be seen as allusion to Christ's carrying the cross on his shoulders.

In Rivendell a fellowship of nine companions is chosen which not only represents the followers of Christ but it also shows how many races, nations, even different kind of people would follow the footsteps of Jesus. Tolkien did not choose a Hobbit randomly. He probably intended that a small and weak creature carries such a heavy burden. According to Wood, Tolkien followed the words of Paul: "God chose what is weak in the world," Paul continues, "to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not [the non-entities], to bring to nothing things that are [the great and powerful] (Cor. 1:27-28)." He calls it a "paradoxical wisdom, when weak, simple and humble accomplish what mighty, clever and proud cannot" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 87).

Sauron believes that anyone would use the ring to obtain more power. Just like the rich or the strong, they want more riches and strength. The evil changes hands and owners until it comes to Frodo. It is his responsibility to bear it on a journey. In *Christian and Pagan* he is described as injured and even taken to the edge of madness. This suffering shadows Christ's – as the "lamb of God" carrying the sins of the world. In the same fashion Frodo is also guiltless when he inherits a huge burden like the ring. It exactly follows St. Peter's letter in the New Testament: "He [Jesus] had done nothing wrong, and had spoken no deceit Peter 2:22" (80).

In Sam and Frodo's journey across Gorgoroth and Orodruin Frodo's weight of the ring grows even heavier. This is very similar to the desperation one can feel when one goes through the events of the last day of Christ's life (Kilby 133-134). Thus Frodo says, "No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark, Sam, and there is no veil between me and the wheel of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades" (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 1226). These words are strongly associated with Christ. Frodo feels all alone in the same

way Jesus did. It is easy to lose oneself in desperation with all the pain and the burden on one's back.

Evans believes that Frodo's martyrdom "is not only for the defeat of evil" (120). He also sacrificed himself for the sake of humankind, for the numerous population of the living beings. His action proposes that from the creator's point of view, both God and Tolkien, the society is worth saving. Personal dedication is truly honoured by the people of Middle-earth. A person will either have a responsible role in the society or he would be associated with "tyranny and self-destruction" (Evans 120). In the Bible there is the same value of sacrificing for one's friends: "No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Besides being capable of self-sacrifice, Frodo shows another Christ-like trait – he is capable of accepting everyone and giving chance to every being. That can be seen in his action of setting Gollum free. It is as if he releases him to see whether Gollum would choose the good or the evil path. Kaufmann claims that Frodo's action is very "childish", but he also points out that that is the behaviour of the kingdom of heaven (151). Frodo follows Gandalf's words when he warns him not to judge. Gandalf points out that death is not the only judgment; there are also "scorn, contempt, neglect, dismissal". Frodo is in danger of committing the subtlest but one of the most dangerous sins – self-righteousness. The same message can be found in the Bible: "Do not Judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get (Matt 7:1)" (Wood, "Tolkien's Augustinian Understanding of Good and Evil", 101).

Besides Frodo, "the most obvious Christ figure in the trilogy" is Gandalf (Ruud 301). He is portrayed as a prophet. He is very wise and he even has a small insight into the future. In *Christian and Pagan* one can read a Tolkien's letter, where he describes Gandalf as an incarnate angel. He is embodied in a physical body and thus capable of pain, fatigue, and even being killed which is very similar to the words in the letter of St. Paul to the Hebrews: It was essential that he should in this way be made completely like his brothers so that he could become a compassionate and trustworthy high priest for their relationship to God, able to expiate the sins of the people. He is compared to quote from the Bible: "For the suffering he himself passed through while being put to the test enables him to help others when they are being put to the test (Hebrews 2: 17-18)" (69).

Ruud believes that Gandalf's story is clearly similar to Christ's. He is an incarnate spirit in a human body who is sent by the higher power. Gandalf sacrifices himself to save his friends. He

dies and is risen in glory as the White Rider. Through his resurrection he brings hope and salvation but he also gains greater power (Ruud 241). When Gandalf falls in Moria it can allude to two different occurrences in the life of Jesus. First, it can allude to Jesus in the desert where he spent forty days fasting and was tested by the Satan himself. Like Jesus Gandalf is also tested by a devil and just like Jesus returns stronger and ready to do what God sent him for. Second, it can represent the resurrection of Christ where Jesus comes back to his disciples all in white. Gandalf also changes from the Grey to the White. Just like his followers do not recognize Jesus, the same way Gandalf's friends do not recognize him. When he returns he is changed not only on the outside but on the inside. He understands that he is more powerful but in his wisdom he is afraid that evil is stronger. He says, "I am Gandalf, Gandalf the White, but Black is mightier still" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 652). In *Christian and Pagan* one can understand that Gandalf is reluctant and maybe even afraid of Sauron. This was an echo to anxiety of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane:

> And he began to feel terror and anguish. And he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and stay awake.' And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. 'Abba, Father!' he said, 'For you everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.' (Mark 14: 34-36) (70).

Although there are many similarities between Gandalf and Jesus, still one cannot claim that Gandalf represents Jesus on the whole: Gandalf is "beyond question Tolkien's Christ figure, but he is not Christ" (Ruud 241). Birzer claims that Tolkien uses several Christian sources for Gandalf. The first similarity is in the New Testament's "The Acts of the Apostles" where God sends an angel to free Peter out of prison and the second one is the similarity with St. Boniface. For example, St. Boniface's view of Anglo-Saxons who lived peacefully and isolated but protected Christian works in isolated monasteries is similar to how Gandalf perceived Hobbits (79). Besides the similarity with an angel and a saint, there is also a similarity with the Holy Ghost. Gandalf calles himself "a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 430) where Secret Fire is the Holy Ghost. Huttar argues that Tolkien uses it because the "medieval folklore recognized two archetypical masters of fire, Jesus and the devil" (138). Drout writes that the Third Person of the Trinity or the Secret Fire

appears very often in Tolkien's works and Tolkien even admitted that he was writing about the Holy Spirit (211).

Gandalf's greatest quality is probably compassion for the pitiful, particularly for Gollum. He is merciful even to Saruman. This reminds the readers to the scene when Jesus forgives those who plotted against him (*Christian and Pagan*, 71). To Gandalf "all life is precious" and he believes that "redemption is possible even for Gollum" (Ruud 301).

Besides Frodo and Gandalf, there is also another Christ-like figure in the novel and it is Aragorn. He is the king who comes with a sword to help the righteous and punish the evil. Just like Jesus is descendant of David, Aragorn is a descendant of Isildur: "The grey figure of the Man, Aragorn son of Arathorn, was tall, and stern as stone, his hand upon the hilt of his sword; he looked as if some king out of the mists of the sea had stepped upon the shores of lesser men" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 653). Aragorn looks like a higher being who comes to rule the realm of humans. Gushurst-Moore found similarities between Aragorn and Christ. The epithets high, glad of face, kingly and Lord of Men directs to "Christ-like majesty and kingliness". She believes that it reflects Mark 16 where Jesus revealed himself to his disciples and "was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (15).

Aragorn is the healer just like Jesus. Aragorn tries to heal all he could Frodo, Faramir, and Eowyn. The true king is also supposed to be a healer: "Would that there were kings in Gondor, as there were once upon a time, they say! For it is said in old lore: *The hands of the king are the hands of a healer.* And so the rightful king could ever be known" (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 1126).

Aragorn takes the Paths of Dead before he comes to Gondor. This shadows the Apostoles' Creed and the verse how Jesus descended to hell before he rose from the dead. Aragorn has to take that path before he can become the king. Before he takes the Path of Dead and becomes a king Aragorn makes a decision. He realizes that he has to choose between being the king or perishing with the rest of the world. Aragorn reveals himself to Sauron in order to provoke him, but he also does it to give strength and courage to humans to continue the fight against evil. Aragorn wants to show people that they would not be alone in the fight; he is the king and he will stand with his people at the battlefield. "'Dangerous indeed, but not to all,' said Aragorn. 'There is one who may claim it by right. For this assuredly is the *palantir* of Orthanc from the treasury of Elendil, set here by the Kings of Gondor. Now my hour draws near. I will take it'" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 775). Wood writes that these words deliberately echo Mark 14:26, when Jesus

approached Golgotha, where he was also crowned to be a king, although of very different kind (*The Gospel According to Tolkien*, 139-140).

1.3 Devoted Christians

Besides those Christ-like figures, other characters are devoted Christians too. King Hrothgar is a true believer in God. "Hrothgar is consistently portrayed as a wise and noble monotheist" (Tolkien, qtd. in Saenz 158). He often mentions God and thanks him:

> First and foremost, let the Almighty Father
> Be thanked for this sight. I suffered a long
> Harrowing by Grendel. But the Heavenly Shepherd
> Can work His wonders always and everywhere. (*Beowulf*, 927-930)

> But now a man,
> With the Lord's assistance, has accomplished something
> None of us could manage before now
> For all our efforts. (*Beowulf*, 938-941)

Hrothgar believes that even though a man is small and weak in comparison to monsters, with God's help all is possible. Accordingly, Beowulf defeats Grendel but only because it is God's will.

Hrothgar, as a devoted Christian, has values such as nobility and wisdom. According to Muri, Hrothgar's sense of morality comes of his belief that a king should emulate godlike unselfishness. This code is introduced in the prologue when the poet states that a prince should bring good and give gifts. This suggests "that all goods are inherited goods and that their proper use is for distribution among the people" (15). So Hrothgar does what he thinks is the best for his people. He is not a tyrant who wants all the power and let others do the dirty work.

He even passes knowledge and wisdom to his people. When Beowulf returns victorious Hrothgar gives a speech that sounds almost like a sermon. Orchard thinks that his speech consists of more than a homiletic advice. He follows Klaeber in the sense that the speech is conspicuous for blending the heroic and theological motives. Orchard believes that the opening establishes Hrothgar's authority. He is like an experienced judge of the humans. This theme recurs again at the end of his speech. He reminisces of his successful rule before Grendel came ("Psychology and Physicality", 106). Even Hrothgar's queen behaves as a Christian. She "thanked God for granting her wish / That a deliverer she could believe in would arrive / To ease their afflictions" (*Beowulf*, 626-628).

Even though Hrothgar seems like a devoted Christian, Howard believes that Hrothgar has failed his people because Grendel takes over the mead-hall. When Beowulf comes no one of Hrothgar's men wants to stay overnight in Heorot. His best men were probably dead and eaten by Grendel. Hrothgar creates a culture of fearfulness and tolerance of malicious. Hunferth represents of what Hrothgar left as inheritance during his reign. He represents all traits that obviously would not be present on court during the height of Hrothgar's power. Hrothgar's weakness is such that he has to tolerate men as Hunferth. The honest Wulfgar and unlucky Handscio are not raised up as high as Hunferth. Beowulf recognises Hunferth as a brother-killer, thus suggesting that he is known for deceit and wickedness and not for "valour" (7-8).

In contrast to *Beowulf*'s Hrothgar, there is a character that can be seen as a perfect Christian, and he is Sam Gamgee, Frodo's friend in *The Lord of the Rings*. As a follower of Frodo, Sam represents a follower of Christ. He does everything that is expected of him. He is a true servant. Sam accepts his duty and does everything to succeed. He has fears and moments of doubt but he never stops doing what God set in front of him. Sam is "the ultimate personification, representative, and defender of the Shire" (Birzer 73). The only thing that keeps him going is to return to Shire and live happily ever after (Birzer 73-74). According to Drout, "Sam emerges as a faithful Christian who follows in his master's footsteps" (138).

There are times when Sam behaves overzealously, especially to Gollum. He is almost as a Christian who dislikes non-Christians. He does not behave like this towards other people; he only treats Gollum that way. He has no sympathy for anyone who is evil; he cannot stand a sin. Even though he seems cruel, when he tied Gollum one can see that "Sam was gentler than his words" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 806).

In their last moments at Mount Doom there is a similarity between him and Simon of Cyrene. He cannot carry the ring – the burden of the world – but he can carry Frodo. Just like Simon helped Jesus to carry the cross, Sam helps Frodo climb Mount Doom. Wood suggests that together with all members of the fellowship, Sam fulfils the command of the Christ: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13) (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 136). Gushurst-Moore believes that "Sam displays most frequently the teachings of Jesus to 'do to others as you would have them do to you' (Luke 6:31)" (19). To Wood Sam Gamgee was "the ultimate hero of *The Lord of the Rings* because he is the ultimate servant" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 164). Because he desires nothing but to aid his master, it makes him the most marvellous Hobbit. Sam truly follows the teaching of the Bible: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:43-45)" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 164).

Sam Gamgee has all qualities of a good Christian, but Galadriel, the co-ruler and Lady of Lothlórien along with her husband, Lord Celeborn, very much resembles the Virgin Mary. She is not truly holy or a virgin but she is very gentle, helpful and virtuous. Tolkien confirmed that Galadriel was the most important Mary figure. He wrote: "It is true that I owe much of this character to Christian and Catholic teaching and imagination about Mary" (qtd. in Birzer 64). *Christian and Pagan* describes Galadriel's connection to Mary. She is the opposite of Sauron (Satan) and she never trusted him. Her "symbolic whiteness" and "purity" support her appearance as the motherly figure. She advises the members of the fellowship and gives them gifts to help them on their journey. Galadriel has traits similar to those of Virgin Mary, but she also mirrors the Myrrh-bearers. She is the first one to see Gandalf after the resurrection similar to women that saw Jesus immediately after His resurrection. According to gospel of John, Mary Magdalene is the first one to see Jesus after his resurrection (55-56). As Burns states, Sam's invocation of her as "Lady" to whom he prays for "light and water" on the way to Mount Doom places her in a position parallel to that of the Blessed Virgin (qtd. in Ruud 214).

3. MONSTERS AS SERVANTS OF THE DEVIL

While the main characters of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Beowulf* are Christ-like and others can be easily interpreted as devoted Christians, some of them have distinct satanic characteristics.

2.1 Adversaries of Beowulf

Humans lived happily in Heorot and their bliss shadows the life in the Garden of Eden. Just like the devil comes to Eden, demons come to Heorot to bring misery. There is even a small prophecy about that: "That doom abided, / But in time it would come: the killer instinct / Unleashed among in-laws, the blood-lust rampant" (*Beowulf*, 83-85). There are three monsters in the poem – Grendel, his mother, and the dragon. All represent evil demons that come to destroy human life.

Grendel is portrayed as a monster, but except for his large stature we do not know much about his physique. His brute strength and thirst for blood makes him a devil's offspring, son of Cain. The poet used these characteristics to show the downfall of Cain and his descendants. It follows the belief that all malevolent monsters are descendants of Cain (*Bloom's Guides: Beowulf*, 14). Grendel can represent any man who turns to sin and becomes a demon on the inside. Through sin all human beings are capable of doing horrifying things. According to Orchard, Grendel is most similar to humans. He is depicted as an "unfortunate man", a "man deprived of joys", who "wretchedly trod the paths of exile in the form of a man" and "the man-shaped destroyer" ("Psychology and Physicality", 93). In the poem he is truly described as a devil sent from hell:

> Then a powerful demon, a prowler through the dark,
>
> Nursed a hard grievance. It harrowed him
>
> To hear the din of the loud banquet
>
> Every day in the hall, the harp being struck
>
> And the clear song of a skilled poet
>
> Telling with mastery of man's beginnings,

How the Almighty had made the earth

A gleaming plain girdled with waters;

In His splendour He set the sun and the moon

To be earth's lamplight, lanterns for men,

And filled the broad lap of the world

With branches and leaves; and quickened life

In every other thing that moved.

So times were pleasant for the people there

Until finally one, a fiend out of hell,

Began to work his evil in the world.

Grendel was the name of this grim demon

Haunting the marches, marauding round the heath

And the desolate fens; he had dwelt for a time

In misery among the banished monsters,

Cain's clan, whom the Creator had outlawed

And condemned as outcasts. For the killing of Abel

The Eternal Lord had exacted a price:

Cain got no good from committing that murder

Because the Almighty made him anathema

And out of the curse of his exile there sprang

Ogres and elves and evil phantoms

And the giants too who strove with God

Time and again until He gave them their reward. (*Beowulf*, 86-114)

The poet describes Grendel as pure evil; he is cruel and has no compassion for anyone. He hates human kind and all that is good – "malignant by nature, he never showed remorse" (*Beowulf*, 137). Grendel only wants to destroy and to bring misery to others. He comes to wreak havoc and kills thirty men. To Tolkien, "Grendel hardly differs from the fiends of the pit who were always in ambush to waylay a righteous man" (Tolkien, "The Monsters and the Critics", 20). Grendel is called the shepherd of sins, and is referred to as the dark death shadow (Hadley 4).

Muri believes that allusion to Cain introduces a sequence of important events. The poet writes about two ideologies of human behaviour: God's law and man's revolt. The poet makes a connection to the conflicts of German tribes. That quarrel "functions not as a cause but as a consequence of the basic crime". The poet's foundation was the Book of Genesis and the murder of Abel as the first law-breaking against the order, which is the theme of the song in Heorot (12). So the importance of the myth is not the murder but the revolt against God. It was not only based on "condemnation of fratricide" but also on "rebellion against Natural Law" and the consequence of "opposition between the exile and the community" (11). That Grendel's grudge is initiated by the song reveals a design where the poet connects present hostility "with the first Biblical feud". In the poem the feud is bequeathed to humans not only figuratively where forces of evil terrorize the society. It is also "the material representation" of the hostility between two forms of entities. The poet begins with the sin of Cain and echoes that first crime. He does it to demonstrate how "rebellion against God" unleashes the evil on the realm of human beings (12-13). Grendel does not only represent Cain in the poem. He is not just a descendant of a traitor who killed his own brother. The poet makes an allusion to Creation of the World. When the Danes built Heorot it was full of music and happiness. Grendel is jealous and full of malice. Music and happiness makes him enraged. He has nothing that people in Heorot have, he is without beauty and alone. Just like Cain and Satan envied humanity so did Grendel, and just like his ancestors hated human kind so did he. Grendel, as their descendant, did the same thing they did, he wanted to destroy what he could not have. He is described as a demon and a monster: "God-cursed Grendel" (*Beowulf*, 121) and is banished for his evil. Through his sins Grendel becomes: "spurned and joyless" (*Beowulf*, 720), "the captain of evil" (*Beowulf*, 749) and "the terror-monger" (*Beowulf*, 765). He "had given offense also to God" (*Beowulf*, 810). Grendel is not pitiful and wretched creature. He is responsible for his actions and because of them he is cursed. Just like his predecessors and devilish cousins he does not repent for his sins and cannot see anyone happy. In his sin he wants to make everyone else as miserable as he is. Chickering believes that monster descent comes from Genesis where Nephilim had children with human

women. He also connects this with Book of Enoch and believes that the giants were "blood relatives of Cain" (qtd. in Hadley 3). Hadley continues that Grendel's connection to a fallen angel is the word "demon" and that he is bearing wrath of God. It appears that Grendel has more in common with the demons of Judeo-Christian world but not so much with a particular ancient human (4). According to Barry, "Grendel stands as an allegory for evil as a whole, not for Satan as an individual". He attacks the Danes in order to wreak havoc on the people. His evil wants to destroy Danish society and to leave the people without security of leadership or a way to protect themselves from the evils that surround them. Thus "Grendel is an allegory for the destruction of ordered, civilised society" (3). "The example of Grendel suggests the possibility that what may have made these legends particularly appealing, and thus attractive subjects for poetry, is that devils appear in all of them" (Anderson 98). Robinson claims that there is a dual perception in that description. To other characters, Grendel is a part of pagan mythology; to the Christian poet and readers he is a "manifestation of evil" (149).

After Grendel is killed, Grendel's mother attacks Heorot in revenge. Beowulf ventures into her cave under a lake, where Grendel's mother nearly defeats Beowulf. He sees an antique sword, with which he kills her and beheads the dead Grendel. Grendel' mother is the second monster that Beowulf has to destroy. She is described more monstrous than Grendel. She resembles devils and demons more than Grendel did: "Grendel's mother, / Monstrous hell-bride, brooded on her wrongs. / She had been forced down into fearful waters, / The cold depths," (*Beowulf*, 1258-1261). According to Niles, Grendel and his mother are given a home that suggest hell and even the extent of their evil is truly demonic. The poet describes them with practically unpleasant attributes. They are like very primitive society, similar to cave-men and at the same time "they have the size and appetite of giants or trolls". On the one hand they are demons and spectres of German mythology and on the other "they are devils of Christian belief" (138).

It can be understood that Grendel and his mother are connected to Leviathan. This comes from the poet's logic; he presumes that after the Flood only monsters that inhabited water could have survived (Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 139). Other than the dragon, the sea-monsters are the only monsters described in the poem.

> They dwell apart
>
> Among wolves on the hills, on windswept crags

And treacherous keshes, where cold streams

Pour down the mountain and disappear

Under mist and moorland. (*Beowulf*, 1357-1361)

Her dwelling is associated to "Cain's punishment of exile" (Nelson 6): "The wide water, the waves and pools / Were no longer infested once the wandering fiend / Let go of her life and this unreliable world" (*Beowulf*, 1620-1622). Niles believes that the poet gives them an ancestry of Cain according to the Augustinian view. He makes them "a ghastly incarnation of the spirit of division in human affairs" that has been present on earth from the time of the Cain and Abel. Their evil is unlimited, not like the trolls or dragons. Because of that they are directed straight for hell like all creatures of their kind. When Beowulf kills Grendel and his mother, the waters are cleansed as if by an exorcism (138). It is as if the surroundings begin to heal. The evil is perceived as a sickness that spreads into everything it touches. All that is in vicinity of it is infested and with the destruction of that evil it can be healed. The poet probably uses this analogy to show how if we move away from the evil our souls will heal. We would be cleansed of that evil.

When Beowulf kills Grendel, he returns from Heorot and becomes the king of the Geats. He rules peacefully until a thief awakens a dragon by stealing his jewelled cup. When the dragon burns the Geats' homes and lands, Beowulf decides to kill the monster personally. He climbs to the dragon's lair where all his thanes flee in terror, leaving him to battle the dragon. Here the dragon wounds Beowulf fatally. This final act of the poem is about Beowulf's fight with the dragon, the third monster he encounters in the epic. *Beowulf* is the first piece of English literature to present a dragonslayer. Although many motifs common to the *Beowulf* dragon existed in the Scandinavian and Germanic literature, the *Beowulf* poet was the first to combine features and present a distinctive fire-breathing dragon. Since dragon is the third and last monster that Beowulf fights, number three (three monsters and three attacks of the dragon) could symbolise three times Jesus fell carrying the Cross.

Williams believes that the dragon is a manifestation of the Leviathan. He is not just a symbol of generalized evil but also of malice. The evil dragon is identified as the disruption of order. He mirrors the dragon in the story of St. George – as the enemy of civilization (qtd. in Nelson 4). The dragon also has another function. The hoarding of the wealth manifests several sins – greed,

haughtiness. There is no room for helping those in need or even loving one's neighbour. The poet probably wants to invoke loathing to sinful life.

> The dragon, as a symbol of the hoarding principle, represents another anti-procreatus; rather than producing wealth and health for the community, the dragon's hoard sterilizes material goods by hoarding them in the ground. In the poem, these demonic forces are analogues to the human failure of the imagination which cannot see beyond the sensible sign. (Muri 21)

Owen-Crocker thinks that paganism is only wrong when Christian virtues are encouraged. Thus, the treasure is ambiguous. The gold, similar to everything in the poem in the pre-Christian world, is truly heathen. When the gold was hidden, "hoarded by the dragon", it was heathen and malevolent. It was no longer perceived as such when a good man with the help of God redeemed it. Even Beowulf's victory was an accomplishment that his people would never be able to compete with (222).

The three monsters seem to be summarized in the following lines: "They are fatherless creatures, / And their whole ancestry is hidden in a past / Of demons and ghosts" (*Beowulf*, 1355-1357). To be fatherless is not meant literally, but the poet wants to show that they live without God. They live without God's mercy, love and even acceptance. The poet probably uses this as a warning to show that everyone is capable of sin and that it is easy to become a monster without God in his life. That can be seen in the words Beowulf says to Unferth: "You killed your own kith and kin, / So for all your cleverness and quick tongue, / You will suffer damnation in the depths of hell" (*Beowulf*, 587-589). That is just the first stage of becoming a monster. If one sins one is doomed. The same thing happens to Grendel. He is "a personification of malice, greed, destruction (the evil side of heroic life), and of the undiscriminating cruelty of fortune that distinguishes not good or bad (the evil aspect of all life)" (Tolkien, "The Monsters and the Critics", 17). The reason to fear Grendel is not only for what he does but also what he is on the inside. Grendel represents any evil man, and that is more terrifying than his actions. Orchard claims that Grendel was "sentient" and a "human-shaped being". That argument was made more apparent when he came to Heorot. He is described as: a "man" and "deprived of joys" ("Psychology and Physicality", 98). The poet intentionally portrays him in a way that is scary to all of us – without God any man can become like Grendel. Chance quotes Tolkien: "For it is true of man, maker of myths that

Grendel and the dragon, in their lust, greed, and malice, have a part in him" ("The King under the Mountain", 62). With his mother as hell-bride and the dragon almost like Satan himself, Grendel is thus most similar to humans. Three different kinds of monsters are used so the readers can understand what sinful life will turn them into. "I would suggest, then, that the monsters are not an inexplicable blunder of taste; they are essential, fundamentally allied to the underlying ideas of the poem, which give it its lofty tone and high seriousness" (Tolkien, "The Monsters and the Critics", 18). Tolkien thus identifies them as the foes of God.

2.2 Gollum, Saruman, and Sauron as the representation of Satan

Smeagol, before he becomes Gollum, is not an evil character. He is just a normal Hobbit. When Deagol finds the ring everything changes. In the Gandalf's story one can understand that Smeagol killed because of the influence of the ring. According to Nelson, Smeagol is full of envy and greed because he wants the ring. Although they were not true brothers their names suggest some kind of kinship. They were brothers in a "figurative sense" and the outcome was the same as in the Genesis: "guilt of the murderer, his exile" and becoming vicious (2).

Gollum was under the influence of the ring for a long time. In that time he lost himself. He lost all that he was; he had no hope and no will. He could not get away from the influence of the ring. Gandalf describes it: "He hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 73). When he promises Frodo to help him one can understand his dependence to the ring. In that situation he is similar to a drug addict; he is prepared to do and say anything only if he could have the ring. Gollum is so deep under the influence that he has no control. Faramir calls Gollum "wicked" and that "malice eats it like a canker" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 905). "Gollum is continually associated with filth (particularly slime) and all that is bestial, especially in his appetite. He is found eating raw things that are wild and often slimy and has a strong aversion to lembas, the food that represents creaturely refinement" (Nelson 11). Wood writes that his swallowing noises were part of his identity, as Tolkien reveals how our personalities have the quality of our acts. Our behaviour manifests inner convictions, be it for good or evil. This mirrors the quote of the Bible: "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks (Luke 6:45)" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien*, 56). Gollum talks to himself but only when no one is listening. It shows his nature, his inner conflict of good versus evil – Gollum versus Smeagol. He

probably lived for centuries in this manner while holding the ring in his hands. He is constantly in conflict with himself. This also represents good and evil that is inside all human beings. We all have inner voices that tell us to behave good and bad. That inner conflict is in human nature. To surpass our evil voice and do good means to be truly Christian. To Nelson the novel makes pretty understandable that Bilbo, Frodo, and even any other person could have followed the footsteps of Gollum (13).

Frodo believes that there is some goodness left in Gollum. Even though he does not trust him completely, as a true Christian he gives him a chance to redeem himself. This probably comes from Gandalf's words of how there is a chance of him being cured. Christensen writes that "he is an example of a damned individual" who lost his soul because he was dedicated to evil but trough grace he saved everyone (10).

Another fallen character is Saruman. Saruman was one of the Istari similar to Gandalf. He was also a Maia who was given a corporeal body in order to help in the fight against Sauron. Saruman was the most powerful of the Istari. His downfall was brought by the desire for more knowledge and power. At the council of Elrond Gandalf explains how Saruman betrayed the good people of Middle-Earth and went to the dark side. He even tried to lure Gandalf on his side with the promise of "Knowledge, Rule, Order" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 338). This is similar to any tyranny that hides behind rules and order but it truly brings destruction and slavery.

Saruman changes sides and becomes an ally to Sauron, but soon he decides he wants to ring for himself. He secretly uses his Uruk-hai to obtain the ring before Sauron. Gandalf's words describe Saruman: "Often does hatred hurt itself!" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 763). Saruman wants to rule and to have the greatest power all for himself. He never truly intended to be an ally to Sauron. Treebeard claims that he is "plotting to become a Power" and that he does "not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment". He calls him "a black traitor" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 616) and thus Saruman has the ugliest sins – he is a traitor who wants to rule everyone. Saruman's thirst for knowledge destroyed him. Although he did gain knowledge; he was not wise enough to understand the dangers of it. There are two quotes that explain it: "It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 345) and "Perilous to us all are the devices of an art deeper than we possess ourselves" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 780). Knowledge can be very dangerous if one does not know how to use it. Tolkien shows us that even if we think we are smart some

knowledge is better to be left alone because it could destroy us. That is exactly what happens to Saruman. He "created weapons of horror, thus perverting the good skills he learned from Aule" (Wood, *The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 30).

Although a traitor, Saruman is not truly a Judas for he was never a part of the fellowship. He is more similar to Pharisees. They did not believe that Jesus was the son of God in the same fashion he did not believe that the fellowship stood any chance of defeating Sauron. They also hid behind words like knowledge and order to rule over lesser humans. Both believed they were sent from God in order to rule with the iron fist.

Both, Saruman and Gollum, are characterized like fallen human beings; people who sin so much that they can never be saved, but the ultimate evil can be seen in the character of Sauron. When Sauron was created he was also good and that can be seen in Elrond's words: "For nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 349). His pride was too great; the want for more power and to rule all was his downfall. Wood writes that the satanic character named Sauron is "linked to a cold-blooded reptilian" – the snake in the Garden of Eden. Even his name comes from Greek word for lizard (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 36). Scheps believes that the "evil is more powerful than good". Because it only wants to enslave and taint, it never creates. Evil uses hidden knowledge that forces of good did not know of or maybe they choose not to use (51). Drout writes how Sauron and his servants were "destined to nothingness" or to the withered existence of "a mere spirit of malice that gnaws itself in the shadows, but cannot grow again" (289).

Wood thinks that there is a hidden meaning to Sauron's appearance as the great eye. The eye is an organ of surface and appearance. It can acquire information and knowledge but not wisdom or understanding. Sauron as an eye lacks perspective and depth. Although his "coercive might and expansive vision" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 59) is very powerful, he still does not comprehend much. He completely lacks sympathetic imagination. Sauron as the eye is unable to hear anything therefore he cannot receive any directions from the God. Even though he can see all, he is still blind to the outside world. He is surrounded by the "unreason, chaos and absurdity" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 59). Because of that metaphorical deafness he cannot comprehend the altruistic motives of the fellowship. As a demon he has vast power. He strives for more power and therefore, he cannot comprehend Frodo's eagerness to intentionally destroy the ring (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 59). Sauron does not have the power to change the

essence of the entire race or species, he can only corrupt individuals with lies and deceptions (Birzer 90).

All three characters used to be good but they became evil. Birzer writes that the fall is a recurring theme in Tolkien's work. It is a very important theme in his stories. Without exception, every character's downfall is preceded by pride. Next to pride is the desire to become all powerful. That can corrupt even the best beings. In the case of Sauron there is an "angelic pride"; in the case of Isildur it is an "individual pride"; in the case of men it is the pride of the entire race (95).

According to Wood, Tolkien did not believe that evil was something that truly existed – "it is nothing". That was probably the greatest horror. Evil could not be logically explained. If it could be truly defined then it could be fought with a certain success but evil is "a devastating nothingness, a nameless black void". It is very irrational. It never concedes to a rational or moral force (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 61). Tolkien's world follows the teaching of the Bible – there is no ultimate evil. Living choose to do good or evil things. Everyone has free will to choose to be good or bad and just like in the real life they do not get to choose consequences of their actions.

4. SIN AS CORRUPTION OF CREATION

Tolkien portrayed the creation as a blessing and not as a curse. He copies the Genesis when God created the world and saw that it was good. Tolkien's world is not the product of a war between two deities, one good and the other evil, as it is in many pagan religions. People of Middle-earth are not just some puppets in a warfare between equally strong malign and benign forces. Tolkien as a Christian declines any dualism. God fashioned all things even though there is a demonic power that operates and acts maliciously in the world. Elves, dwarves, humans, and even hobbits are free creatures and not mere toys of the gods. "Tolkien's cosmos is a vast unitary work whose permanent shape and blessed outcome Iluvatar has determined from the outset" (Wood, *The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 20). "In other words, the forces of evil are incapable of creating; they can only pervert and corrupt what is already there" (Scheps 47).

Since evil is only capable of corrupting of what is already there, trolls and orcs which are the creation of evil, are corrupted versions of ents and elves: "Trolls are only counterfeits, made by the Enemy in the Great Darkness, in mockery of Ents, as Orcs were of Elves" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers,* 633). According to Birzer, Tolkien suggests that Orcs are not created out of nothing. They function as puppet-like creatures without own mind or free will and thus they can be compared to ants, which are under the direct influence of the queen (Birzer 93-94). While trolls and orcs are corrupted versions of ents and elves, balrogs originate from angels. Ruud notes that the Balrog was a Maia – an angelic being. He was one among many "angels" that rebelled against God. They are very powerful and Sauron is the only one who is more powerful than they are. They are portrayed as "monsters of fire" cloaked in shadow (459). Similarly to other evil beings they were also created by God, and like all of them they rebelled and lead a sinful life.

Besides these corrupted versions of elves, ents, and angels, the magic can be corrupted too. There are two kinds of magic, and that is confirmed in the words of Galadriel: "For this is what your folk would call magic, I believe; though I do not understand clearly what they mean; and they seem to use the same word of the deceits of the Enemy" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 471). Drout notes that there is a small distinction between them. One of them is magic – the ordinary magic, and the other one is goeteia which is some kind of witchcraft. Neither is good or bad – only the motive or the purpose could be good or bad (438). But Tolkien on the other hand wrote that goeteia is used to "terrify and subjugate". It is the "perversion of ... art to power" (qtd. in Birzer 103). So, obviously, both sides have some supernatural powers. The

difference is the usage of that power, be it for good or for ill. From Galadriel's words one can conclude that same term for good and evil powers is not acceptable to her. She has power and one should probably trust her when she makes a distinction between the two.

The thing that corrupts the beings is sin. Tolkien follows Christian teachings of sins, he even uses seven deadly sins in *The Lord of the Rings*. Each race has a kind of good characteristic but it also has one of the deadly sins: "Dwarves = Greed, Men = Pride, Elves = Envy, Ents = Sloth, Hobbits = Gluttony, Wormtongue = Lechery, Orcs = Anger" (Drout 6). It is very interesting how Tolkien even uses all these sins to portray the danger of damnation for each race. Dwarves are actually greedy and all they care for is their riches. They are represented as strong and hard workers but that hard work makes them workaholics. They are so involved into getting richer that it literally brings their doom. That can be seen in the story of dwarves in Moria. They dug too deep and thus woke up a Balrog. In comparison to them ents are truly lazy. They are very wise; they do nothing evil in their lives. But from the Treebeard one can see that some of them were so lazy they turned into trees. The biggest proof of their laziness is the fact that they lost the Entwives but no one wants to go and search for them. It is easier to stay in their wood for hundreds of years and not even try to look for them. Hobbits enjoy food and drinks a bit too much. They are described as farmers but their hunger is never satisfied. They have many meals through the day. Orcs hate everyone. They do not feel love or compassion. All they want is to kill and destroy. They even hate their master Sauron and each other. Tolkien gives negative traits to all of his characters to portray the dangers of the sin. All sinners put self in the front. Greed comes because a person wants all for himself. Orcs hate everyone else but themselves. Hobbit always need to fill a hole inside. Elves are envious of Valar and Maiar but also of human beings – because they could not have what others have. Humans thought they are very important. There is no perfect character or perfect race. Everyone has to be really careful not to take the path of sin because that can lead him to his downfall. And the ring is a representation of that. It uses your greatest sin against you.

The ring can be perceived as the ultimate sin. "Christians believe that original sin was "unmade" by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Original sin is "the One Sin to rule them all and in the darkness bind them," and this "One Sin" is "unmade" by the Crucifixion of Christ on the hill of Golgotha, the place of the skull (Mount Doom)" (Drout 138). Sauron who is the ultimate evil created the ring – the ultimate sin. It influences many like Smeagol, Frodo and Bilbo. Even Saruman, who never even laid his eyes on the ring, falls under its domination. Purtill thinks that "the Ring has not merely neutral power, but satanic power" (91). Birzer believes that the ring at

some level represents the machine, because it is just an aid to control others, but in its fundament the ring represents the sin, especially the first sin. He also thinks it alludes to the Genesis: "ye too shall be as Gods" (105).

According to Wood, Tolkien in his work demonstrates that sin is always "a twisting, distortion and perversion of the good". He often uses marring as a metaphor for the works of evil. The sin cannot destroy the goodness but it can taint it. Evil is always portrayed as the parasite and accordingly it can never create original or free creatures. The evil can only create "parodies and counterfeits" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 51). Those who do the evil things always somehow create the reason for doing it. Thus, for example Wood sees that Smeagol does not confess his greed. He claims that the ring was a present and that he deserved it. That is another Tolkien's demonstration how "seductive power of evil" is. It crushes the truth because all those that committed sins and crimes "must always justify them". Similar to Adam who blamed Eve for his misbehaviour, Smeagol converts his evil deed into a benevolent compulsion. Tolkien shows that rarely is a "sin committed for its own sake" – but constantly in the name of some supposed good (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 55). Not only weak creatures like Smeagol give in to the temptation of evil, but it can easily happen to someone strong as Gandalf. Wood writes that even Gandalf who is the most altruistic of all characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, is tempted by the ring. Gandalf is very sensible and he feels pity for all living beings. That also "makes him the least capable" to carry the ring. On the one hand, the ring would grant him power to defend the weak but by doing so they would never become strong. On the other hand, the ring's great power would probably enable him to forgive all evil. That could diminish the necessary connection between "mercy and justice, pardon and repentance". Therefore he fearfully declines "Frodo's offer of the Ring" (*The Gospel According to Tolkien,* 63). In his wisdom Gandalf gives the perfect example what would happen to anyone who uses it: "It is far more powerful than I ever dared to think at first, so powerful that in the end it would utterly overcome anyone of mortal race who possessed it. It would possess him" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 61). If one regards the one ring as the manifestation of the Original sin, one understands how a person would behave if he would live with that sin. Gandalf explains it best – a person would be possessed by it. This reflects the Christian belief of a sin. Although a sin is not a being, a person who lives in that sin would not truly control his behaviour. Sooner or later he would be a slave to that sin. According to Birzer, one of the powers of the ring is destruction of selfhood. Thus it would bring the user to Sauron's dominion and turn him from a living being into a wraith. Birzer finds strong confirmation of Frodo's great character in his will

to resist temptation even though he is getting weaker. Frodo demonstrates pretty well the "Saint Augustine's doctrine of the effective will" (139).

Tolkien's message is the fight against the sin. That is exactly what main characters do in the work. Most characters want to be free of the ring – the sin. But it has its own power and it cannot be hidden or buried. Gandalf's words show us that Bilbo was under the influence: "It has got far too much hold on you. Let it go! And then you can go yourself, and be free" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 44). Bilbo had the ring for years, although not so long as Gollum, and he was becoming more dependant to it. When the ring has a hold over a person it is very similar to a hold of a sin. A person becomes a slave to it and he has no control. The only thing that can help is to let it go, but to gain freedom is not very easy or simple. The more time one spends with the ring the more power it has over that person. It happens to Frodo too. At first he gives it freely to Gandalf but as he spends more and more time carrying the ring he is more and more unwilling to give it up. To Kilby Frodo's last resolve "not to destroy the Ring" alludes to Christ's cry from the Cross – "*My God, why hast thou forsaken me*?" (134).

According to Wood, with this description of ring and its power over humans Tolkien is close to the teachings of Paul and Augustine. They believed that true freedom was the liberty to choose between good and evil. Choosing evil, people sacrifice their freedom; they become enslaved. These theologians claim that "God's grace enables our right response to it". According to this belief it is better to say that we are "product of the gifts" we received than "the sum of decisions" we made. "Not all evil is chosen". Evil can seduce for some time. It can also mercilessly impose its will. Frodo realises this sour reality in the first confrontation with the Ringwraiths (*The Gospel According to Tolkien*, 70).

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Tolkien and *Beowulf's* poet were devout Christians. In their works they transform the pagan world with Christian characters and themes. They were both influenced by St. Augustine. "Tolkien's belief that the best of the pagan world should be sanctified reflects St. Augustine's thinking" (Birzer 35). St. Augustine writes that Christians should use every philosophy that is in harmony with their faith. He himself used Cicero and Plato to support his claim that the flourishing Christianity is compatible with the post-Roman world. Pre-Christian religions served as a "preparatory teaching" for those that would embrace Christianity. He believed that philosophy was given to the Greeks to prepare them for Christianity because it acted as a teacher for the Greeks. It prepared them for Jesus Christ just like the laws of the Jews did. He thought that Plato and Aristotle only served to make a way for Christianity similar to the way Abraham and Moses did for the Jews (qtd. in Birzer 35-36). Accordingly, Tolkien and *Beowulf's* poet changed Germanic mythology and ancient world; and they filled it with Christian themes and analogies. They managed to make a combination of Germanic heroism and Christianity: "Certainly both of these value systems are important in *The Lord of the Rings*, but Tolkien does not seem to present them in conflict" (Ruud 176-177).

Both of them knew a lot about the life of Jesus Christ and the stories of the Bible. Not only did they copy or allude to the stories, but they also used moral teachings of the Christianity. Although some critics maybe believe that this was not done intentionally, but the chances are slim that a writer would create so many similarities unintentionally. Even Tolkien himself said of *The Lord of the Rings*, "*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision" (qtd. in Drout 685). And I would use the same explanation for the *Beowulf*. The Biblical references in *Beowulf* were probably the best way to make the Anglo-Saxon people abandon the world of sin in order not to be forever cursed. The poet used the hero Beowulf to promote chaste life. On the other hand, Grendel is so despicable because he is there to portray the sinful life that leads to eternal damnation. Tolkien also uses heroes to promote a Christian way of life and he uses monsters to deter people from sin.

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