

In Pursuit of the Divine Spark: An Analysis of Tolkien's The Silmarillion and The Lord of the Rings Series through a Gnostic Framework

İsmail TEKŞEN

Karabük University, Türkiye

Abstract

Dating back to ancient times, Gnosticism stands as an esoteric sect of belief that envisages the common human as the battleground between two forces namely the light and the dark. The dispute results from an archetypal divergence that takes place between two divinities. While the transcendental god holds the holy wisdom under his dominion that manifests itself as the holy spark, a lesser deity named 'Demiurge' labours darkness into a material prison for the purpose of captivating and strangling the holy light. The radical dual division in the human condition delineates each pole with definitive terms, yet these highly discrepant antipodes are convoluted closely together by birth so that each person stands a mystery box in which crafted darkness forges the materialized body that encapsulates a spark of holy light. According to the belief system, every person is destined to grant the ultimate and total victory for either force over the other with corresponding outcomes. If a soul proves his merit by letting the holy spark shine and wash away the darkness, he reaches a divine state of blessed salvation that is called gnosis, however those who surrender to darkness are forced to undergo life and death cycles until they achieve their pure spiritual rebirth. To achieve the holy salvation, total asceticism and relinquishing from the earthly appeals are stated as the indispensable requisites. In light of the ancient esoteric teaching, Tolkien's notoriously famous Ring promises much compatibility with the gnostic assumption of the diabolic matter, the destruction of which enables the hero to sail for an allegoric expedition in which both the destination and the rebirth of the hero pieces together the complete the divine godhead.

Keywords: John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, The Silmarillion, The Lord of the Rings, Gnosticism

1. Introduction

Despite the fact that the theme of 'hero's resistance to the powerful and relentless villain', still persists in finding a place in the epic genre as an indispensable tenet, a salient change has been detected in the methodology of a few literary works that have reached high popularity and are presented to even a wider spectrum of audiences through adaptations such as movies and computer games. To put it succinctly, the hero's muscular strength tends to give way to the hero's willpower. The enemy's strength and the hero's weakness are attributed to the presence of a malevolent magical object. The Deathly Hallows and the Horcruxes we know from the *Harry Potter* story, the wand belonging to the White Queen-Jadis of *Narnia Chronicles*, and

finally Frodo's notorious ring give us clear-cut concrete examples in this regard. In the face of all these evil and powerful objects, the heroes of the stories are equipped with natures such as love, understanding, tolerance, courage, and sacrifice which can be attributed to the virtues of a dignified, peaceful man. But above all, the most important duty of the hero is to turn away and relinquish from these evil objects that inherently have high appeal. At the end of the day, even the destruction of the monstrous villains proves dependent on the annihilation of these objects.

No matter how inconspicuous the change in the mode of thought permeates, the striking triumph of the heroes kindles an unquenchable urge to look deeper into the narrations. Harry Potter is a young adult who can defeat one of the most powerful wizards of all times, in the same fashion Queen Jadis is defeated by a band of children and despite being a hobbit, a group of folks who are marked for their short height and childish physics, Frodo achieves to kill an evil spirit who has managed to claim thousands of lives that once belonged to more powerful fighters. In such a context, the defeat of the physical power based on matter against the willpower that can be reached through the steps of the spiritual ascension pushes the entire framework beyond the current norms, and circumstances make necessary the mediation of teachings that cannot be met by the conventions of the known world. In accordance with the circumstances in question, Gnosticism, as a series of teachings from ancient times, can provide a satisfactory stance to the answer sought. In this context, this study aims to exhibit changing patterns of thought in literary conveyances rather than trying to advertise an esoteric idea. In other words, the stories are rehandled by unveiling the face narration so that newly exposed allegoric tones can be given meaning by means of a novel context that enables cryptic bonds with the ancient esoteric teachings. To do so, it focuses on Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of The Rings* stories together, as detached volumes of one grand narrative. In this scientific labour, Gnosticism is utilized as in the form of a literary theory and the foretold narrations are examined in light of the sect's teachings.

It is a demanding job to give a precise definition of Gnosticism due to the various ways the branch has been interpreted. For one thing, it is a religion that has achieved to complete itself by gathering all the components that transform a belief into a religion. For another, it is a radical philosophical thinking as to the gist of human life (Williams, 1999). Even so, the varying points of view converge on certain grounds to denote the belief as a syncretized whole by bringing various sects of belief together namely: Buddhism, Manichaeism, Kabala, Ancient Egypt Mysteries, Zoroastrianism and Platonic Philosophy (Pagels, 1989).

Because of its multifaceted nature, even professionals in the esoteric field find it difficult to define Gnosticism in comprehensive terms. However, the true resolution of the teaching may lie in its very name "gnosis," which means "knowledge-understanding" or "insight," and all accordingly, the sect emphasizes the reviving of the divine spark through acquiring 'insight into true wisdom' which has been overshadowed by the material world. According to Gnostic theology, this revival is the sole way to true salvation (Gündüz, 1997).

To emphasize the state under consideration, Gnostics praise "a man" for holding gnosis, that makes him "a redeemed man," a fully awake body among thousands of sleeping ones (Rudolph, 1984, p.56). Gnosticism, to this aim, openly encourages personal experimental knowledge while pushing intellectual impulses to the sidelines (Hoeller, 1992). When questioned about the true nature of the gnosis, the only answer given is a suggesting puzzle, "know yourself." At this moment, gnosis publicly declares its actual character as a difficult-to-achieve awareness rather than a mere acculturation of divine theologies.

Despite the overt emphasis on the acquisition of divine truths, the precise description of the gnosis mainly relies on codices discovered in the Nag Hammadi region of Upper Egypt in 1945. The interesting narrative of two farmer brothers leads to the remarkable discovery of long-buried manuscripts. The Library of Gnosticism is, thereof, appropriately named after these collections of handwritten codices, and the essential narrative of theology appears to have sprung from the same source that inscribed the genesis of the texts under consideration (Burns, 2016). Despite the fact that personal revelation of divine truths is required in order to achieve gnosis, the essential principles are presented in such a way that initiates are required to take action in order to break through the fake realities (Piwowarczyk, 2021).

In the broadest sense, the cult educates practitioners of a dualistic divinity system. The theology begins with the mention of an unknowable-transcendent God from whom emerges Sophia (knowledge) in the form of a self-thought. This release occurs as a downward movement and degeneration because it is also a distancing act from the perfect being. Sophia directs her attention to the darkness thus the distancing from the holy light gapes even further. There, she (Sophia) gives birth to a second deity in the form of a dragon with the head of a lion and ember eyes. This deity is eventually known as Ialdabaoth, which means "the blind god," because he was born in the dark and has never met the unknown God. Upon declaring his being the sole divinity, he forms matter in the darkness and continues to build until he reaches what is now known as the materialistic universe. He labours with renewed zeal for the creation of humanity in order to have subjects for his self-worship. The avarice of worship leads to the creation of Adam and Eve, who are both lifeless sculpted bodies at the time. To resurrect the corpses, the Demiurge (Ialdabaoth) needs help from Sophia who infuses a spirit into each, by implanting wisdom in these first individuals on Earth. The acquisition of wisdom results in a more spiritual trait in Adam and Eve's corrupt nature and directs them toward real wisdom and salvation. The condition also alluded to the path to the virtuous transcendent god connected with light (Gündüz, 1997; Robinson, 1977).

The following events, according to the Gnostic teachings, culminate in a conflict and struggle between light and darkness. Ialdabaoth enlists the assistance of other supreme entities to detour freshly born humanity from the light. The entities known as Archons serve their master in order to strangle and bury the light, causing Adam and Eve to become unduly entwined with the material world while disregarding the means of holy awareness. While admiring the beauty of Eden and being uninformed of the true nature of a malevolent god, Adam and Eve come across the forbidden tree of knowledge. The tree, which the Demiurge forbids because it has been planted by the forces of light and its fruits contain true wisdom, nevertheless attracts these people because an eagle—not a serpent, as it has been described in Abrahamic sacred texts—tells them the truth about the tree's true nature and begs them to eat its fruit. After Adam and Eve eat the fruit and remember the heavenly truths, the Demiurge drives them out of paradise since they no longer worship him (Brakke, 2011; Floramo, 2005; Smoley, 2007).

Henceforward, Ialdabaoth rapes Eve and becomes the father of Abel and Cain, in order to bury the holy light once more in darkness. Therefore, Cain and Abel emerge as predisposed bodies to rule over the material elements as well as the corporeal bodies of future humans because their father is a tyrannical diabolic entity rather than a human. Eve, on the other hand, bears another son by Adam, Seth, who is to be the epitome of ideal mankind as they make their path towards the light. Once a dichotomy is established for the rest of mankind, fates are predetermined for them as well, namely: men of evil under the authority of the Demiurge, Ialdabaoth, and men of light to be saved upon obtaining the gnosis. (Roof, 1993; Rudolph, 1987).

The falling metaphor can be used to summarise Gnosticism's theology in a nutshell. The first fall occurs as a self-thought of the transcendental god, paving the path for the emergence of Sophia (knowledge). Though this birth appears to be a positive emerging at first, it is a type of degeneration since it is a process of distancing from the whole-perfect being. The second motif of the fall depicts Ialdabaoth's birth, almost as if it were a miscarriage. Once he has fallen into the pits of darkness, he announces himself to be the only deity and labours to mould and dominate the materialized world. Another fall motif depicts the genesis of humanity and the arrival of the light-bearing messengers (Gündüz, 1997).

The theology regards the human body as a cage made of matter in which the divine spark is imprisoned. Meanwhile, it is a battlefield for the forces of light versus the forces of darkness. The evil forces are constantly fighting to suppress the divine light inherent in the human body by keeping people preoccupied with mere materiality. In doing so Ialdabaoth and his archons anticipate silencing and annihilating this celestial spark. On the other hand, the forces of light attempt to awaken humanity and steer it towards the true wisdom, gnosis. By the same token, Gnostics refer to Jesus as a virtuous messenger of heavenly light. According to them, he is the logos of the transcendent god, and his campaign is to promote gnosis to those who have long been duped by the materialized traps of the false god (Kwiatkowski, 1998; Tecimer, 2004).

Another aspect of how the materialized cosmos is given meaning through the Gnostic framework is the naming of Ialdabaoth-the Demiurge. As the word denotes half side of creation or half-maker in the fullest sense, the name relates directly to the defect or weakness. In gnostic scriptures, the Demiurge is mentioned as imperfect, a flaw that shows itself through his flawed creation. The group interprets the chaos, corruption, and suffrages that are occurring on Earth as defective byproducts of a deficient creation process. Because the human body is undeniably a piece of material carnation, it is prone to faults such as being forgetful and haughty, lusty, cruel, and vulgar, all of which are attributed to Demiurge's traits (Pagels, 1989).

The flesh is mentioned in Gnostics as an impediment for the divine spark to acquire the ultimate wisdom. True gnosis will remain unattainable till the earthbound cravings of the body are eliminated. Gnostics divide persons into three categories based on this: "pneumatics, psychics, and hylics (earthly)." People in the first category are said to be ready for redemption through the acquisition of the real gnosis. The second category includes those who are misled into believing that the Demiurge is the true-righteous deity. Hylics, however, are the least favourable of the three since they are earthbound and materialistic, making them blind to light (Rudolph, 1984. P.92).

Once the compelling characteristics and associated fates are assigned to each group of people, Gnosticism offers the pneumatics and psychics the opportunity for salvation through a set of requirements. To be emanated from the dark, an individual must recognize the dualistic nature of his creation, which owes traits derived from two divine entities. Gnostics use the phrase "know yourself" to emphasize this critical phase. Despite the fact that the slogan appears to refer to the self-control of hedonist urges through a Buddhistic façade, it originally deals with the bifurcate dissolution of a human; one belonging to the transcendent divinity in the shape of a divine spark to guide the person to true wisdom, and the other belonging to the Demiurge, which is basically what is known as matter as a crafted form of the darkness. It should be noted at this point that in the Gnostic worldview, darkness has been interpreted and referred to as a lower being because it has been uninformed of the divine unknowable god since the beginning of time. In other words, it is not an unjustified assumption to state that the cosmogony in Gnosticism begins with the presence/creation of two archetypal beings: Light and Dark. Even

after many aeons, ages, and the creation of uncountable species of life, the two archetypal conceptions appear to be essentially the same (Nock, 1964; Robinson, 1977).

The initiate is required to embark on a spiritual journey with the ultimate goal of finding salvation through light once he is aware of the ancient polarisation guiding his own creation. The absolute realization of truths and the achievement of appropriate norms are what bind this voyage. The initiate is informed of the dualism that governs existence as well as the futility and, at best, inadequacy of current religions. The truth is a gift that can only be attained via spiritual and psychical development, not a question of acculturation (Rudolph, 1984; Jonas, 1958).

The condition of the divine consciousness can only be attained to via asceticism. The initiate is demanded to turn away from the earthly, materialistic world after drawing a line between spiritual and materialistic conceptions of life. This type of continuous abstention stems from the fact that the Demiurge uses debaucherous techniques to satisfy not just the body's desires but also the ways by which they can be sated. He utilizes them as a toy rattle to distract people from the holy wisdom and keep them focused on the physical world. The complete absence of materialized pleasures makes it possible for the initiate to be prepared for receiving gnosis. Once the person has attained true salvation and has cleansed his soul of the Demiurge's taint, he becomes a capable adept to whom true gnosis can be revealed, reaching divine enlightenment. He returns to his genuine, divine roots as a result. The same idea predicts the end of the world in the gnostic narrative when the fight between light and darkness becomes passive following the earlier victory and ushers in eternal peace (Gündüz, 1997; Rudolph, 1984).

2. The Analysis of Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* Series through a Gnostic Framework

This study sets out to show how Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* stories can be reassessed through an esoteric approach by deriving incentives from the previous resolution. Another depth of meaning is thought to be emerging for readers when the texts' apparent meaning is substituted with a peripheral one. In other words, the outward narration and its allegoric footnotes work together for the critical eye to explore the edges of what is already known and what is yet to be.

As has been mentioned earlier, the succinct definition of the gnostic frame is brought about by gnostic groups' preference for spiritual purity as the only path to humanity's advancement and ultimate salvation (gnosis per se), which they imply requires complete asceticism from worldly pleasures. It is believed that "materiality" is the cause of the "downfall and corruption of man" while manifesting small variances in how the sect approaches the cosmos and chaos. (Demir, 2011, p. 21; Kılıç, 2017, p.148). According to W. Nicholas (2009), "In the cosmos, space and time have a malevolent character and may be personified as demonic beings separating man from God." (16) Furthermore, by promoting it as "Within each natural man is an 'inner man,' a fallen spark of the divine substance," the sects demand the necessary insight into the holy spark in the body. Thereby, the collective mantra speaks through itself as man has the chance to emerge from his stupor since this heavenly core is inherent in every human being. After all, attaining the divine godhead is typically considered as requiring the revival of the divine spark. (Demir, 2011, p.19).

At this juncture, the best justification for the choice of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* as the study's main materials can be provided by the narrations' notably similar

tendencies to handle the nature of the darkness and, malice. Despite sharing a common Gnostic mindset, *The Lord of the Rings* deals with evil from a more materialized perspective by associating it with matter, giving the narration a more obvious and palpable disposition. This tendency remains in line with *The Silmarillion*, which exhibits a primary orientation to locate the origins of evil through a narration that shares a similar worldview with the Gnostic cosmogony.

Gnostic ideology explains the emergence of evil with the advent of a second deity known as the Demiurge, as it has been discussed in depth before. This deity governs the dark, a place symbolic of being removed from the god and devoid of the divine light. There, he unjustifiably asserts that he is the only divinity, and because he is unable to recognize the transcendental god, he is described as being foolish, haughty, selfish, and incorrect (Tecimer, 2004).

Tolkien adheres to the myth of a secondary deity who is responsible for the evil. In his fiction, the author demonstrates this fashion, following a somewhat similar genealogy with Gnostic teachings. To be precise, Tolkien's genesis commences with a celestial song that has been augured by the transcendental god Eru and is accompanied by the lesser-secondary gods who are also named as Valar. However, the harmony provided by the holy song is broken by the interruption of Melkor who tries to execute a divergent melody. The emerging disharmony manifests itself as a bitter sort of distortion in creation for the fact that until the moment Melkor spoils the melody, the ongoing music generates a universe full of beauties and prodigies. At this point, the remarkable similarity between Tolkien's universe and the Gnostic genesis becomes ever more salient. Melkor, of the fiction, stands in the same league with the gnostic Demiurge for being the source of the evil, who, also, has the power to affect the creation contrary to the scriptural depictions of Satan that is responsible for the evil but has no ability to create. By doing this, Tolkien creates a new, alternate path for the evil to be handled. Thus, Tolkien presents the reader with the fictionalized deity of the *The Silmarillion* who not only tempts evil but also generates it. Considering the foregoing tendency, it may be inferred that Tolkien accepts a dualistic nature while discussing the subject of good and evil. Though this is a minor addition to the vile traits of the villain, the subsequent dissolution it brings about results in a radical alteration in the way the evil has been interpreted and commented on. Instead of being administrated by a diabolic agent, evil owes its emergence to a diabolical entity and reaches primordial times. With this in mind, the fiction presents evil in a subtly novel context by which it stands as an arche-force that is also associated with a divergent divinity. In the traditional Abrahamic sense, no matter how far exiled may it be from the godhead, evil is tolerated by God as an agent in the examination of humanity. Yet the newly emerging context breaks the adopted conventions and yields a chasm to separate the poles by which evil is monopolized by a diabolical astral being.

The tale of the Silmarils and the trees of Telperion lends another Gnostic allusion to the degradation that Melkor's chaos initially sparked. Because of the fact that they can fill the world with the holy light and make it a welcoming environment for life, the trees known as Telperion are special creations. Melkor is troubled by their existence for two reasons. Initially, despite his unmerited disposition, Melkor wants to have exclusive possession of the ancient holy light, which is in Eru's monopoly. In fiction, the force of creation is represented by this light. Melkor desires to be the only one, thus he seeks ways to possess the holy light as the sole owner. When he is unable to accomplish this, he changes his attitude towards the light and adopts a more brutal strategy: He kills the trees by giving their light to a gigantic monster spider incarnate of darkness, putting an end to all the divine light on earth. He, however, is not satisfied with this destruction and sets out to find a way to obtain Silmarils. These gems are praised as special

items because they carry the holy light inside, and this tempts the evil deity to commit sinful deeds to obtain them at all costs.

The ambition to be the sole god to cherish omnipotence brings the Demiurge of Gnostic Theology and Melkor in Tolkien's fiction closely together, making them two similar reflections of one common mentality. Tolkien's evil god is primarily interested in ways to dethrone the transcendental god and has little to do with real-world people. A similar quality can be seen in Demiurge's actions as well. The blind deity claims to be "the only one" during his generation of darkness, but there are many light agents who interfere with his claim. It is highly intriguing that Melkor can't touch the Silmarils without burning his fingertips when he snatches them. Tolkien radicalizes the incompatibilities between dark and light by having Melkor experience pain from the gems, and he also highlights this evil deity's undeserved inability to control the holy light. As a result of his unmerited claim, Melkor is bound by a reign in darkness, a state of total bereavement from the light. Then on, the existence of light always serves as a deterrent to evil beings, and Melkor leaves his insignia on history by remaining a captive of the night forever. It should be noted here that when the Demiurge creates the first man out of darkness, he is unable to give him life. The spirit is infused into man's moulded body by Sophia (knowledge), giving it motion and life. Therefore, the common man possesses will and power to confront the Demiurge and restore his soul to its former divine position by using this spirit, which emanates from the transcendental god in the shape of a holy spark. Gnostics believe that when numerous souls begin to shine in holy light and completely remove the darkness, the Demiurge will be completely vanquished (Gündüz, 1997).

Tolkien's Melkor stands in for the Gnostic deity Demiurge for a variety of reasons. By fathering evil, the fictionalized notorious deity sullies the divine nature. He wishes to dethrone the transcendental god and assert his sole rule. To accomplish so, he searches for the holy light, which turns out to be an agent in his utter loss. 'Melkor' changes his disposition as a diabolic being to the primal source of diabolicity as a discrepant deity. This metamorphosis takes place after some incidents in which darkness is conquered by holy light. Once Melkor's defeat in the face of holy light reaches a definitive end, the vile deity enmeshes with darkness ever more and reigns in it. He dares confront the other Valar (secondary benign deities) in pursuit of spoiling the holy creation. In his campaign, he appeals to the divine and powerful agents of light. He lures them to join his band and fight. Once these entities change their fraction, they undergo a similar metamorphosis into a beastly, vile and diabolic creation. Based on this premise, the fearsome 'Sauron' figure from the *The Lord of the Rings* series can be identified as a great demon, Satan, or, more specifically, an archon, who are wicked assistants of the Demiurge.

The word 'Arkhn' is translated from Greek to English as 'ruler' due to having authority over the material world. In the Gnostic belief system, archons appear as evil astral agents who are primarily concerned with intervening in the ideas, feelings, and acts of humans in order to change them from spiritual elevation. They are cited as "beings among the furthest away from God" and held "accountable for bad temptations" (Denzey, 2012, p.135). When Melkor's desire to be the only deity is combined with Sauron's ring to dominate all folks of Middle Earth, this villain can be compared to a wicked archon assisting the Demiurge. Tolkien demonstrates this allegory by giving Sauron a different generation than Melkor. While Melkor is a Vala, a subsidiary deity after Eru in the hierarchy, Sauron is an obscure primal spirit known as Maia in the service of Valar.

Tolkien's Sauron is a notably evil character who is not afraid to commit heinous crimes. He is famous for his cunning and wicked deceits to gain sovereignty over other beings. Nonetheless,

what identifies him as an evil being is his goal to rule over elves, dwarves, and humans through a brotherhood of rings. He uses the web of rings he had woven to control the emotions, thoughts, and actions of others. Once within a person's mind, he seduces him into doing evil. When examined in depth, all of these activities reveal his demonic plan to spread his reign as the sole monarch. At this point, the villain's trait has enormous potential to reveal an esoteric side of the story, allowing him to achieve his goal. Sauron engraves a prophecy on the ring: "One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them, one ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them; In the Land of Mordor, where the shadows lie." (Tolkien, 2019, p.254) In this setting, darkness serves as the villain's most compelling principal agent in his campaign. Tolkien explicitly mentions dark and shadow as the crowning of the wicked labour if it is successfully performed. His exquisite concern for the dark to associate evil with posits much credibility to be re-evaluated as an organic relationship linking the narration to Gnostic theology. While evil is traditionally accounted for the emergence of dread, violence, devastation, and death; the author clearly alludes to the dark itself as responsible for the generation, expansion, and eternal confinement of the evil, all of which bear striking similarities with Gnostic teachings.

According to the theology, man is in a paradoxical situation in which two conflicting energies combine within the body for lifetime. However, the equilibrium created by birth does not last forever, and one force eventually triumphs over the other. The opposing forces in question are acknowledged to be holy light and degrading dark. These arche components do, in fact, represent something other than corporeality, a subtle essence with ancient resolves per se. To put it simply, while darkness gives rise to concrete materialism, it is also the embodied form of ignorance. The trademark stems from the Demiurge's claim to be the sole god who has made a mistake by being unaware of the transcendental god (Barnstone and Meyer, 2003). In this division, light is a symbol of spirituality that represents divine wisdom, or gnosis. When a soul attains gnosis, he attains spiritual maturity and reclaims his real divine roots. As a result, his life cycles come to an end.

To defeat the dark ultimately, Tolkien follows a Gnostic route map for the ultimate gnosis. While the initial step is defined as the initiate's mental and spiritual preparation for enlightenment through a series of challenges in which vile traits of materiality are exchanged for the holy virtues, the latter processes refer to the ultimate destination for a purified soul in the god-head, which takes in the form of spiritual knowledge beyond the five senses, acquisition of which is a direct referent to the true divine-human nature. Hoeller (1992) states the following about this fact:

Man does not attain the knowledge that awakens him from these dreams by cognition but through revelatory experience, and this knowledge is not information but a modification of the sensate being... Before the awakening, men undergo troubled dreams.(62)

In *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Frodo performs a pretty simplistic rendition of himself. Notwithstanding his advanced age, the way he feels and behaves reminds the reader of a child's naivety, so the hero's mental and spiritual transformations are easy to see and observe. Tolkien, on the other hand, employs his literary genius by placing mysterious artifacts in the hands of the hero. That is, Frodo's inexperienced simplicity is contrasted with the concealed magnitude of the relics entrusted to him. He is an ordinary Hobbit, yet an unusual one for bearing both the Ring and the Phial. The ring represents material attachment and has the ability to "bind" the people of Middle Earth "in darkness" (Tolkien, 2019, p.50). The Phial, on the other hand, is a holy vessel filled with water that seized the light of Earendil's star. The star is not a typical one

because of the fact that it has been kindled by a Silmaril. And, going back in time, Silmarils appear as gemstones that have absorbed the pure holy light emanating from the holy god Eru. In a nutshell, the hero is portrayed as a sly explorer whose long-cherished, idyllic simplicity is disturbed by a paradoxical conundrum. This is an arcane esoteric circumstance that reminds the reader, who is as oblivious as the hero, of the ancient secrets he has been hitherto living with. Obviously, the ring and the phial represent the material and spiritual sides of a common man, respectively.

Frodo is put to the test by each object along the way. He resists the ring's allure and turns to the phial for support when the circumstances are tough. After the ring is eternally destroyed at the end of the story, the hero departs on one last journey to the Undying Lands where the benign gods on the side of holy light dwell. Even on this last journey, Frodo is shown holding the phial. That indicates the eventual destination as a location where the holy light can be accommodated naturally by which the veiled language of allegory confines a rather persuading gnostic triumph between the lines. Thus, the entire narrative displays a simple examination of the human will. The adventure's vivid details allow the hero to reveal a spiritual secret. This is a simple matrix with only a few elements: the ring on one side, the phial on the other, and the hero in between is nothing but a self-reflected image of the common man in esoteric- gnostic esteem.

If the face meaning of the narration is stripped for a deeper, allegoric one in light of the preceding premises, Tolkien's motive to take his hero on a spiritual journey in which sufferings prepare him for the divine understanding gains a deeper dimension. The key requisites of the path are separation from the desired and ultimate and absolute asceticism from material blessings. In exchange, a virtue by God rewards each successful manoeuvre of the hero. When obtained as all, the powers under discussion serve as a Jacobian ladder for the soul's rise towards the light. As a result of the bestowment of gnosis, the hero is transformed from earthbound to divine. Frodo's peaceful entrance to the Undying Lands marks the culmination of his cloaked esoteric battle. When the face meaning is removed away in favour of a deeper one, the narration's deconstructed finale bestows onto its hero a new nature: veteran but respectable, pure from worldliness and armed with virtues thus exalted to the genuine divine place.

3. Conclusion

In light of the preceding analyses, Tolkien's narration possesses elements that might be coined esoteric since spiritual dignity is held in higher regard than the material perspective. The stories that have been named above offer a lot of potential for connecting evil and corruption with earthly aspirations. Through symbols, the author highlights this truth. Sauron's ring can now be reinterpreted as signified materiality. Despite offering great potential, the object only ever leads to its owners' ruin. Surprisingly, this item also plays a crucial part in the hero's slow but steady spiritual ascent following a set of rigorous tests. According to the esoteric framework of the research, these individuals reach salvation by renouncing the relics permanently and refusing the object's great allure. As a result, Frodo's desire to destroy the ring can be read as an act of asceticism, which is believed to be essential to gain salvation and spiritual rebirth. Given the foregoing, it is possible to interpret Frodo's perilous journey to Mount Doom esoterically in accordance with the discovery of the divine spark that has been hidden in the material darkness of the body.

The aforementioned discovery demands unconventional mining, in which the traditional tools of dig and shovel are swapped out for mind and will. The stories use Gnostic attitudes to help

the hero undergo a mental transformation towards something that is more moral, spiritual, and divine. From a larger viewpoint, the writer can be commended for giving the mental means that are necessary for the same modification of the reader's mind while the hero goes through a transitional process. In this way, the reader and the main character are two sides of the same coin, and the adventure the protagonist has undertaken promises a similar kind of change that can be sparked inside the reader's head. In light of this, it can be said that what initially appears to be the hero's journey eventually transforms into a gnostic transmutation of both the hero and the reader. Along the way, vile traits such as greed, anger, cruelty, idleness, selfishness and ignorance are gradually swapped with the merited virtues of a divine man. Not only the hero but also the reader is encouraged to experience similar motives to cling to sacrifice, patience, clemency, perseverance and wisdom in the face of numerous manifestations of the corruption.

Through the newly emerging novel facet, stories denounce materialism for defiling the soul and elevate living a moral and virtuous life as the only requirement for ultimate salvation. The narrative patterns strive diligently to pave the way for the praised state of gnosis to erase the material corruption. This pursuit is manifested by means of an intriguingly spiritual ending. To do this, the narrator emphasizes the need to use 'willpower' effectively. "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us." explains the esoteric labour Tolkien has undertaken to his protagonist succinctly. To sum up, the author's creation of fantastical realms gives readers a chance to investigate ancient teachings about life. The matter and being earthbound is directly related to evil and darkness, while divine spirituality is associated with goodness and light. The preceding lecture not only summarizes the esoteric conveyances of Tolkien's grand narrative but also can be envisioned as a succinct explanation of Gnosticism, and accordingly, the person or the hero is given a single assignment in this division. He needs to relinquish from the earthliness while clinging to the heavenly light. The fundamental strategy for achieving this goal is described as the constant control of the will against the corrupting worldly allures.

References

- Barnstone, W, & Meyer, M, (Eds.) (2003) *The Gnostic Bible*. Shamballa Publishing
- Brakke, D. (2011). *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity*. Cambridge Mass. Harvard University
- Burns, D. M. (2016). "Telling Nag Hammadi's Egyptian Stories". *Bulletin for the Study of Religion*. 45 (2): 5–11.
- Demir, H. (2011) *Mit Kozmos ve Akıl: Zerdüştlük, Maniheizm, Hristiyan Gnostikler ve İslam*. Sarkaç Yayınları.
- Denzey, N. (2012). *Introduction to "Gnosticism": Ancient Voices, Christian Worlds*. Oxford University Press
- Floramio G. (2005) *Gnostisizm Tarihi*. Litera Publishing
- Gündüz, S. (1997) Gnostik Mitolojide Düşüş Motifi ve Demiurg Düşüncesi. *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*. 9 / 9 (Ocak): 121-166
- Hoeller. S. (1992). What Is a Gnostic? *Gnosis: A Journal of Western Inner Traditions*. Vol. 23

- Jonas, H. (1958). *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kılıç, M. E. (2017) *Hermesler Hermes*, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.
- Kwiatkowski, F. (1998). How To Attain Liberation From a False World? The Gnostic Myth of Sophia in Dark City. *Journal of Religion & Film*. Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 34
- Nock, A. D. (1964). *Gnosticism*. The Harvard Theological Review, 57(4), 255–279.
- Pagels, E. H. (1989). *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Random House
- Piwowarczyk, P. (2021) *Lexicon of Spiritual Powers in the Nag Hammadi "Library" in the Light of the Texts of Ritual Power*. Wydawnictwo University Press
- Robinson, J. M. (1997) *Coptic Gnostic Library Project: The Nag Hammadi library in English*. New York: Harper & Row
- Roof, W. C. (1993). *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of The Baby Boom Generation*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Rudolph, K. (1987). *GNOSIS: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. New York: & Row Publishing
- Smoley, R. (2007). *Forbidden Faith: The Secret History of Gnosticism*. HarperOne Publishing.
- Tecimer, Ö. (2004). *Gül Haç: Batı Dünyasının Yeraltı Kaynakları*. Plan B Publishing
- Tolkien, J. R. R. (2017) *Silmarillion*, İthaki.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. (2019) *Lord of the Rings*, Metis.
- Williams, M.A. (1999). *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*. Princeton University Press