

## Representation of Moral Values and Immoral Disputes in J.R.R. Tolkien's Novels

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### Abstract

This paper aims to emphasize and teach good morals and ethics through *The Hobbits*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* to give good changes in people's minds and succeed in life with a positive attitude. In these novels, J.R.R. Tolkien portrays good characteristics of people and the benefits of moral behaviors. Also, he focuses on the evil attributes of human beings and the fate of their life due to following immoral qualities. The objective of this study is to know how moral values help for a happy and peaceful life and study how immoral acts give faults and evil destiny.

**Keywords:** Immoral Qualities, J.R.R. Tolkien, Moral Values, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*

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## 1. Introduction

As a children's literature writer, J.R.R. Tolkien gives importance to the concepts relevant to children's life that led them to recognize the reality of life through factual concepts such as growth, loss, success and failures. In the present world, the situations and the mental attitude of human beings are extremely changed; people do harmful activities against society and the environment, without considering the effects of immoral acts. To know and clarify the effects of moral values and corrupts, this paper examines the primary reasons for a worthy and peaceful life and elucidates the evil characteristics, immoral acts, the sufferings and challenges met for their deeds.

## 2. Literature Review

Tolkien's works are fundamentally optimistic and assert that beauty and goodness will ultimately triumph, although there is an unavoidable price to be paid. Because Tolkien's works are stylistically romantic, they turn the minds and hearts of the reader to a "golden age," a time of great prosperity and peace, a time of enlightenment". (Hyde, 2002, pp.165-166)

Through the research, *Fantasy Literature and Christianity: Morality in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit*, Pavic signifies the moral ethics and Christian values are seamlessly presented in the books of Tolkien and she states that Tolkien gives life to the characters which help the people to see the truth of their lives in an entirely different light.

Even though his religious convictions are not so explicit in *The Lord of the Rings*, the influence of Christianity is evident in most of the main characters' inner moral struggle, their values and ethics, their belief in providential design, their hope and their persistent fight for the freedom of their people. Many of his characters fighting for the good cause can be compared to Jesus Christ, while the evil one share some traits with Satan himself. Tolkien was a man of strong convictions and he firmly believed in Christian values and doctrines. (Pavic, 2016, p.18)

In the research *J.R.R. Tolkien and the Morality of Monstrosity*, Fawcett describes the monsters' cruel characters thought moral to the people through how not to be in life. Fawcett states that Tolkien remains conscious of the genuine moral role of the various races; the Dwarves have changed their good responsibility because of the wars in the Third Age, the Dragon possessed shameless greed and the Orcs are represented for their deadly corruption.

Tolkien's concept of the monster as a blending of past myth and contemporary belief is central to the complexity of Middle-earth, and has been an inspiration for later writers of fantasy literature. His monsters are a blend of past and present, changing the moral context of the creatures from the epic heroic narratives into modern war-time frameworks; Tolkien draws ancient ideas of good versus evil into a modern, post-war world by creating monsters with sympathetic voices, creatures who undergo a narrative downfall and codeswitching villains. (Fawcett, 2014, p.177)

Through the research, *The Problem of Greed in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*, Chris Larimore denotes how the characters of Middle earth are corrupted by powerful greed. He states that all over *The Hobbit*, the Dwarves are driven by greed which puts together the poor Bilbo Baggins with the dwarves to leave their comfortable life. Most of the characters in these two novels are tempted by the deadly sin of greed that destroyed their mind.

In a world where companionship, trust, pride and dignity are the ruling forces of morality, greed and material wealth hold no place in the social order of things, and all those that pursue these negative morals almost always come to an end, with very rare instances of repentance. A lot can be learned from characters such as Thorin and Boromir, as both openly repent of their lust for power and wealth, albeit on their deathbeds. (Larimore, 2012, p. 68)

### **3. Representation of Moral and Immoral Deeds**

J.R.R. Tolkien's works are based on the contrasts between hope and despair, light and dark, good and evil, and enlightenment and unawareness. His novels primarily emphasize the human desires for power, money, wealth, and precious materials to destroy life and lead to unsuccessful and hostile life. In the novels *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* the hobbits Bilbo, Frodo, Sam, Pippin, and Merry are loyal to their companions Gandalf and Aragorn; accept whatever they ask to do to save the world from the evil characters.

They give respect and support to their elders and friends who follow good values in their life and oppose the persons who are corrupt the people and society. Bilbo proves himself as a good companion and trustworthy person to his companion; protects the companionship in each struggle and unsafe place, Thorin respects him and lets Bilbo be a leader in their journey

The hobbits come out from their comfortable lifestyle at the request of Gandalf and struggle a lot with their friends to achieve their quests and never give up their tasks even though they are confronted by a lot of evil creatures. They help each other, and without having any greediness and pride, they complete their quest successfully.

Morgoth, Sauron, Smaug, Fëanor, Eöl, Saruman and Thorin never give respect to their relatives, friends and their feelings. Even at the end of their lives, they were unable to accomplish their ambitions because they were solely focused on themselves. They missed everything because of their pride, impatient, and carelessness.

Tolkien suggests that forgiving one another is a vital social deed to restore peace to the world. The hobbits, Rohan Men, and Gandalf refuse to imprison their foes Gollum, Saruman, and Sauron; instead of that show mercy and advise them to stop their dishonest behavior and live a peaceful life.

In *All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections*, Mahatma Gandhi writes that a strong person forgives others whereas a weak person cannot. Despite having the opportunity to murder Gollum for the ring, Bilbo chooses to forgive him and let him live. Bilbo's mercy helps his cousin Frodo in his quest; Gandalf states that "the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 2007, p. 78).

The finest ornament for a man is humility, all other decorations are worthless. The elf Elrond invites all creatures to come together and decide the fate of the Ring. He never feels proud of his extraordinary powers, which include the ability to heal any form of harm. He supports and encourages Frodo when others mock and ridicule his decision to carry the ring to Mount Doom. Because of his kind and sincere demeanor, he is regarded as a knowledgeable and greatest leader.

Tolkien portrays traits like kindness, generosity, and hospitality spread happiness and hopefulness; these traits help people be believed by others and open up more opportunities. In the Indian mythology known as the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna states that good deeds never result in the wrong destiny. As he mentions the eagles are respected and believed to be noble and brave creatures because they protect nature and be loyal to those who helped them.

Tolkien emphasizes that people should not forget who helps them in their struggling time. Gandalf helps and saves the greatest Eagle Gwaihir and their family from the poisoned arrows and evil creatures, for that, they come to help Gandalf and his followers throughout their quest. They take responsibility for Gandalf's life and help Bern, Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam to save them from evil characters and hazardous situations. The Lord of the Eagles Gwaihir comes

with other eagles to carry Bilbo and his friends from the burning treetops to save them from wolves and saves Frodo and Sam from the fire mountain. For their effort, and helping tendency, they are praised and admired by everyone.

Even though Saruman mocks Gandalf for being with the hobbits and helping them to achieve their quest, with patience, Gandalf tells Saruman that “things are now moving well require the union of all our strength” (*The Lord of the Rings*, 336). In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna states that a wise man lets go of all outcomes, good or bad, and concentrates only on the deeds; Gandalf overcomes all the obstacles and inspires others as wise people.

Tolkien depicts that everyone honors the Arda figure Tom Bombadil even though he is a mysterious individual; he confronts the evil forces with confidence, courage, effort, and virtues; he saves Frodo and his companions from the enormous Willow tree and invites them into his home where he provides food and protection. His values, courage, humility, and taking responsibility for the forest allowed him to live a pleasant and peaceful life with his family.

Tolkien suggests that people become virtuous when they give up their four vices which are jealousy, desire, anger, and cursing others; and those who exhibit virtues like kindness, generosity, and social responsibility give benefits to them. He implies that excellent monarchs and leaders look after their people and provide what they need; these qualities enable Gandalf and Aragorn to provide good leadership to their friends. They value and prioritize the opinions of their friends and companions, value and uphold self-respect, self-discipline, humility, acceptance of personal and social responsibility, never dismiss or undervalue others, and take care of them.

Tolkien suggests that purity, courage, patience, faith, and persistence are the keys to greatness which enable one to conquer all the challenges in life. According to the famous devotional Tamil poetess Avvaiyar, when individuals donate water at the base of a coconut tree, it takes time to produce coconuts at the top of the tree; until the task is finished, people must be patient to reap the full advantages. And she declares that people should never make assumptions about individuals based on their appearance; a palm leaf may be huge, but it has no fragrance, whereas a little magizham flower has a lovely fragrance.

A person's physical stature or appearance has nothing to do with their intelligence, ambition, and capacity to win, no matter how great the adventure or how many monsters or challenges are experienced throughout life, according to the protagonists in Tolkien's works. Tolkien emphasizes the importance of maintaining an unbreakable connection with everyone; despite their diminutive size compared to others, they are prepared to take on any difficulties to protect their world and inhabitants. They are kind people who lead simple lives, forgive others, and welcome everyone as a friend. Rather than accepting gifts themselves, they give gifts to those in need.

The hobbits, Tom Bombadil, Elrond, Beorn, Bard, and most of the women characters such as Goldberry, Glorfindel, and Galadriel give more importance to their family and friends and protect them from perilous situations. They never give importance to prosperity and authority and be friendly with everyone. They give importance to unity and believe unity is the strength to face any situation and endanger creatures. Their well-intentioned acts help them to achieve their quest successfully.

The good characters encourage the readers to take and create opportunities, accept changes, and bring out from their comfort zone to see the reality of life. Tolkien emphasizes that everyone must have courage, confidence and determination to attain their aim. Courage can make people wealthy, intelligent and even strong; when people desire to fulfil their dreams, they must be confident to face a lot of risks or difficulties to get closer to their goals. And also, courageous people can change impossible things into a possible one. Courage and confidence let people act continuously to pursue the proper purposes.

The hobbits are depicted as small creatures, but they undertake journeys because of their moral courage, self-assurance, and tenacity. They stand up to huge creatures like dragons, orcs, wolves, and the Black Rider. Tolkien suggests through the hobbits that individuals must possess the bravery to overcome worry, fear, uncertainty, hurdles, pressure, impending events, discomforts, misunderstandings, and any other hindrance to achieving or upholding the best version of existence. "Courage will now be your best defense against the storm that is at hand – that and such hope as I bring" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 2007, p. 980).

With courage and good intentions, Bilbo helps his friends; his moral courage is portrayed through his encounter with Trolls, Gollum, Goblin, Spider of Mirkwood, the dragon Smaug, the King of Wood-Elves and Thorin. He is afraid to oppose others at the beginning of the adventure, but he develops himself as a hero and achieves a worthy life.

Tolkien states that to live a better life, people must avoid the deeds which destroy their fame; people's dishonorable acts such as pride, temptation, and greediness ruin their fame. Even though Sauron and Saruman are loyal and responsible persons, in the beginning, their allure and greed for power change them into wicked persons who never cared about others' well-being and forget their noble characteristics. Greediness and temptation are evil in life that never help to develop good qualities, inner talents, and skills, and also never allow people to recognize their real noble character.

According to Tolkien, even the good characters such as Morgoth, Sauron, the Elves, the Dwarves, Saruman, Gollum, and Boromir have surrendered to temptation which has turned them into arrogant and cunning individuals. Morgoth is attracted by God's power and the Elves' Silmarillion; Sauron is fascinated by the Ring's power and his desire for the title "Lord"; Smaug is enthralled by the Dwarves' treasure; the spiders are seduced by the valuable gifts. The other characters such as the Black Riders, the Trolls, and the Orcs become their masters' slaves which let them suffer till the end. When their leaders hide in spectral areas, they suffer greatly to protect them.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, When Frodo gives her the Ring, Galadriel refuses to take it because she fears it would turn her into an evil being like Sauron. She claims that the mighty Ring has been corrupting her mind for years since she has been craving its power; she leads a deserving life and she is revered by all for her kindness.

In the *Ramayana*, Ravana is one of the remarkable persons at the beginning, but because of his pride, envy, greediness, and temptation, no one gives respect to him and his words; for his illicit acts, everyone hates him. Similar to Ravana, Melkor and the Elves were initially the greatest nobles, but because of their arrogance, greed, and desire for the Silmarils as well as their desire for retribution, they lose good friendships and support from their relatives which are the main cause of their demise.

Thiruvalluvar states that if a person gains wealth and power through his dishonest deeds, it is like keeping water in a wet clay pot that will break quickly. As he said, Tolkien portrays that Morgoth, Saruman, Sauron and Smaug gain their wealth and power through their dishonest deeds but lose them as soon as possible. Because of their betrayal, selfishness and greed for power, they break all their relationships with superior people and break promises and social support.

Tolkien denotes that nobility of birth and wealth are useless if they are prideful and arrogant; Thorin and Fëanor hate those who are given trouble to them and take revenge against them. They feel pride because of belonging to the Kings' family and their ability to create elegant and priceless stones Jewells that lead them to be against everyone and never accept anyone's opinions. They act according to their wish and dominate others to achieve their selfish goals. They never consider the opinions, sentiments, or goodness of their followers, which causes them to run into numerous problems and monsters. Because of their unpleasant behavior, they also lose their respectable traits, friends, and family members.

Being the first-born and noblest species in Middle-earth lets the Elves feel proud of their way of existence. They are divided into different groups and build kingdoms for themselves, each type of elf struggles with Morgoth, Sauron, and their followers who are looking for the One Ring and the Silmarils to dominate the world. This causes the Elves to dwell in discomfort areas and live without peace of mind.

King Denethor declines Gandalf's help and prefers to murder himself instead of giving up his power and pride. Saruman rejects mercy shown to him because of his pride which leads to his death; the Ents take over Isengard and siege Saruman's Tower of Orthanc, but Gandalf decides to protect Saruman, but he refuses this concern politely. Even though they have high values and power, due to having no wisdom and pride, they suffer till the end of life.

According to Yudhishtira in *the Mahabharata*, anger is an enemy that is hard to overcome, and greed is an unending illness. Tolkien illustrates how the Dwarves' anger with the dragon and greed for the treasure caused them to lose their peace of mind and comfortable lifestyle; they sought revenge on the dragon, which caused them to suffer from beginning to end. The Dwarves' only intention is to recover the treasure; they have not considered any justification for their illegal actions. With their impatience, desire for vengeance, sense of pride in their wealth, and jealousy of the Elves' abilities and possessions, they endure a great deal of hardship, including being captured by Elves, Goblins, Spiders, Wolves, and Orcs.

Morgoth, Sauron, Saruman, Smaug, Thorin, Fëanor, and Thingol have no patience and faith; they lack the strength to confront others and hide in shadowy areas out of fear. For instance, Smaug's arrogance, jealousy, and greed led him to hastily destroy the Dwarves' territory, to possess the Dwarves' enormous pile of treasure. His arrogance lets him use his fury fire to burn down the surrounding areas so that no one would ever be able to access it. Without taking rest, he consciously protects the treasure. Supremacy, priceless gems, and wealth tempt good people, which leads them to their unhappy ends. Wise people despise ungrateful behavior and value tolerance and forbearance.



Tolkien depicts the problems and difficulties brought on by excessive materialistic lifestyles, irresponsible modernization, rapid industrialization, urbanization, globalization, and the impact of foreign cultures which degrade the ethical and moral standards of the world.

*The Hobbit* emphasizes the effects of courage, greediness, and hospitality. Courage assists Bilbo to develop himself from a timid person into a hero; greediness is portrayed through the Dwarves, Gollum, and Smaug; hospitality is represented through good characters like the Elves, Bilbo, Beorn, and Lake-men Bard are helping others without expecting anything from them.

The effects of friendship, comprehension, forgiveness, the thirst for power, the struggle between good and evil, and accepting responsibility are emphasised in *The Lord of the Rings*. The hobbits, Gandalf, the elves, the men, and the dwarf Gimili all show compassion and friendship by helping one another to overcome challenges until the end.

The fight between good and evil, as well as the consequences of pride, greed, and jealousy highlighted in *The Silmarillion*. Melkor, Fëanor, and Sauron are used to illustrate pride, greed, and envy through the horrible activities that endanger their lives.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study highlights that having a sound mind and good habits instead of prosperity, physical attractiveness, or wealth makes a person live a happy and pleasant life. The hobbits, Gandalf, Aragorn, the Ents, and the Elves' characteristics suggest friendly nature, humility, courage, patience, faith, and generosity that increase tranquilly in the universe. Tolkien suggests that in the modern era, people give more importance to power and wealth and destroy nature and humans in their desire for power, treasure, and prosperity. Through the earlier life of the hobbits, Tolkien denotes that in the pre-modern age, people give preference to a pleasant and peaceful life.

Tolkien characterizes each evil character in different ways to teach morals; the temptation of mind, concentrating only on ego-centric concepts, selfishness, anxiety, not thinking about their life and goals, cruelty, and having no patience are the main reasons for the downfall of all the evil characters. Due to their sinful deeds, they hide in dark places, have no communication with others, live with anxious minds, lose their good friends and relatives, have no strength and courage to face anyone, and suffer physically and mentally till the end of their life.

Tolkien indicates how a person can increase their self-worth and personal growth through kindness, generosity, friendship with good people, hospitality, loyalty, patience, faithfulness, harmony, forgiveness, humility, wisdom, tolerance, determination, responsibility, sincerity, sacrifice, confidence, courage, belief, giving importance to unity, hard work, optimistic thoughts, and being willing to take risks to live a better life. He also teaches how to give reputation to little things.

Additionally, he explains how having pride, temptation, anxiety, fear, impoliteness, greed, anger, hypocrisy, hater, regret, grudge, wicked characteristics, treating others as a slave, judging someone by their appearance, being afraid to carry out good deeds, spreading rumors, having a desire for other people's possessions and wealth, adhering to evil things and creations cause people to lose their dignity and strength.

Tolkien emphasizes that people should maintain a positive attitude while dealing with hardships, problems, and sorrows which encourages them to grow as brave individuals whose persistence and bravery enable them to confront dangerous situations. He also emphasizes that material prosperity and outward beauty will never bring true happiness, but the proper moral decisions and actions help to reduce the problems and get more opportunities to achieve their goals.

In Tolkien's depiction, good always triumphs over evil; even though the people are afraid and helpless, their enthusiasm for learning new things and defending the earth from evil creatures propels them to take chances and participate in daring acts that enable them to deal with any situations, find solutions to issues, feel a sense of unity, and be firmly grounded in reality. They never sense pride or greed in their mind and never try to corrupt others; they are being loyal, kind, courageous, and also forgiving of others' mistakes, which leads them to have a pleasant and affluent life throughout their lives.

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