

Winter 12-15-1987

## Sauron and Dracula

Gwenyth Hood

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Hood, Gwenyth (1987) "Sauron and Dracula," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 14: No. 2, Article 2.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol14/iss2/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:  
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>



---

## Online Summer Seminar 2023

August 5-6, 2023: Fantasy Goes to Hell: Depictions of Hell in Modern Fantasy Texts

<https://mythsoc.org/oms/oms-2023.htm>



### Sauron and Dracula

#### Abstract

Compares Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Tolkien's Sauron, noting both profound similarities and important differences, especially in the relationship of these villains and those they tempt to evil.

#### Additional Keywords

Stoker, Bram—Characters—*Dracula*; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Sauron; Vampires

# Sauron and Dracula

## Gwenyth Hood

Superficial similarities between the Sauron of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and the Dracula of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* will strike anyone who reads both works. But the relationship between the two chief antagonists goes far beyond the superficial. Sauron and Dracula are tyrant-monsters of similar motives and powers. Both are counter-creators of a mode of existence associated with the powers of darkness which is parasitical on the natural life of creation and at active war with it, called not "living" but "Un-Dead" (spelled "undead" in Tolkien, III 118) in both. Both seek to draw others into this "undead" and hold them there by establishing a bond of intimate psychological domination over them. Both tyrants use hypnotic eyes in order to feed their visions into the minds of their victims, and control their actions once it is there. In both works, domination by the tyrant represents high spiritual terror because it is a kind of damnation-on-earth which cuts off its victims from the possibility of release by a natural death. Finally, both raise troubling questions about people's moral responsibilities for the content of their unconscious minds. But intriguing as all these similarities are, the divergences in the work are still more striking, because they show a darkening in the concept of evil, and a heightened consciousness on Tolkien's part of his protagonists' struggle to maintain their own good vision of the world despite the power of the Eye of the tyrant, in whose vision hope is unreal.

### Dracula

Taken by himself, Dracula is ghastly enough. A Vampire, he governs Vampire-slaves from his grave, consuming, enslaving, and ruthlessly killing men and women and children when it suits his fancy. In his desire to spread his unliving empire, he uses two tactics: enticement, in which he inflames the irrational desires of his would-be converts for those corrupt but intoxicating powers and pleasures to which he has access; and terrorization, by which he batters and torments his victims' minds and emotions, trying to break their grip on their own visions so that they will be unable to perceive anything better than his. For of course the lure of corrupt vision is much more powerful to one who does not have true vision.

Dracula and his followers still possess much of the allure which attaches to all vivid human personalities. Dracula himself is a tall, powerful and striking person (though not conventionally handsome); and also witty, energetic and passionate. As for his followers, all the Vampire ladies in his service are beautiful. The bond between Dracula and his followers comprises both love and hate and is apparently held in permanent tension by a sexual ecstasy which Stoker repeatedly suggests without explaining outright.

All these qualities might lure self-centered, unreflecting sensualists into the Vampire existence, but Stoker's main characters are altruistic, self-critical and chaste. For them the Vampires clearly possess repulsive qualities so inextricably linked with their alluring ones as to make Vampires altogether sinister. That the Vampires have bound themselves into this limited bodily existence beyond its appointed time and selfishly absorbed the life-blood of others to maintain

it shows in their most prominent features and in their manner and gestures. Hence the main characters describe the Vampire allure in a way which undercuts it. Dracula is first described as having "a hard-looking mouth, with very red lips and sharp-looking teeth as white as ivory" (17). Bright red lips and ivory teeth are attractive features in most catalogues of beauty, but the former do not go well with a hard mouth and the latter do not require sharpness. Those elements suggest what is later made explicit, that the sharp teeth are used to bite the jugular vein and the lips are red from sucking blood.

The above description of Dracula is relatively objective, however, as the observer, Jonathan Harker is not subject to his sexual allure. On the other hand, Jonathan's description of the Vampire ladies, his designated tempters, is all a-tremble with desire and fear, attraction and repulsion. He writes,

In the moonlight opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. Two were dark, and had great dark, piercing eyes, that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon... The other was fair... with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires... All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some long-ing, and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked desire that they would kiss me with those red lips... They whispered together, and then all three laughed -- such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of waterglasses when played on by a cunning hand. (47) *Italics mine*

Hardness and attractiveness which is intense at the same time it is perceived to be ruthless and calculated, is a characteristic of all Stoker's Vampires. Yet Dracula's tyrannical domination is not all cunning. Even he is sometimes overwhelmed by passion, as appears in the passage which succeeds the one above. Just as the blonde lady is about to "kiss" Jonathan Harker, who lies half-hypnotized, in "an agony of delightful anticipation," Dracula sweeps in upon the scene. As Jonathan describes it:

As my eyes opened involuntarily I saw his [Dracula's] strong hands grasp the slender neck of the fair woman and with giant power draw it back... Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even to [sic] the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing... With a fierce sweep of his arm, he hurled the woman from him... In a voice which, though low... seemed to cut through the air... he said, "How dare you touch him, any of you?... This man belongs to me." (49)

At such terrible wrath, Dracula's slaves might well grovel and whine for mercy, but instead, the blonde


*Count Dracula and his victims*

lady responds with "a laugh of ribald coquetry" and talks back to him: "You yourself never loved; you never love," she accuses. The other Vampire ladies punctuate her remark with "such a mirthless, hard, soulless laughter...; it seemed like the pleasure of fiends" (49). But pleasure it is, and moved by this criticism, Dracula denies the charge, declaring, "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past." He assures them that they may consume Jonathan after he has served his purposes. Then he permits them to take away the whimpering child he has carried into the castle in a sack. Jonathan faints (49).

Thus Dracula and his fiendish followers cannot quite do without some fossilized affection for one another. Nevertheless the residue of allure and affection which they possess would hardly, by itself, make their mode of existence appealing to most normal, healthy human beings, let alone altruistic, reflective and chaste ones. Therefore, in drawing converts, Dracula cannot rely on allure alone. He must also terrorize his victims and destroy their own visions. To a victim who sees himself teetering on the brink of annihilation, Dracula can indeed appear as a saviour in default of anything better. We see this combination of seduction and terrorization at work on many victims throughout Stoker's book.

The first individual upon whom we see Dracula work is Jonathan Harker, the young solicitor whom Count Dracula has brought from London for legal purposes. Because Jonathan first sees Dracula in his waking state, we are able to study the work of the vision upon him more clearly than with the other victims, who first meet him unconsciously in a trance-state. Sitting in the carriage with Dracula as a driver and watching his recent traveling companions ride away from them down over the hill in the public coach, Jonathan feels "a strange chill," and "a lonely feeling." Some unconscious, intuitive sense tells him that he is all alone with death. But Dracula reassures Jonathan by precise and detailed attention to his comfort, throwing a cloak across his shoulders and a rug across his knees and offering him plum brandy (17-18). Once again at the castle, on shaking hands

with the Count, Jonathan feels a chill, and notes that the Count's hand is "more like the hand of a dead than a living man" (23). But provided with a fire and a good supper and the Count's fascinating company, he lets these feelings go. Allurement and terrorization have both begun already, on a subtle level. Dracula is already inducing him to suppress those intuitions which perceive the Vampire's evil. Indeed, Jonathan is already induced to discount the evidence of his senses. He explains away the supernatural things he has witnessed as nightmares brought on by his sleepy and half-hypnotized state (20).

This strategy, of inducing Jonathan to overlook his offenses by behaving charmingly to him sometimes, works well for a few days, but gradually the anomalies pile up until even the tolerant, good natured Jonathan can no longer regard Dracula as a normal, decent person, even making allowances for foreignness and eccentricity. A turning point is the shaving incident. Dracula comes in while Jonathan is shaving and does not register in his mirror; when Jonathan notices him, he starts and cuts himself, inflamed by the sight of blood, Dracula leaps at him, but is quelled by the sight of the crucifix. Dracula then smashes Jonathan's mirror and exits with soft-spoken but cryptic lines about how dangerous it is to cut oneself in Transylvania (34). Suspicious, Jonathan explores the castle and finds all that all the doors are locked and he is a prisoner (35). Jonathan's options are to confront the Count, or to play along with him, pretending not to have taken offense, thereby forestalling sterner measures to control him, or more clever ones to deceive him while he seeks means to escape. He chooses the latter. What he does not realize is that this is the strategy Dracula expects him to adopt, and the only one he will tolerate. He writes the following night of his attempts to draw Dracula into conversation, and reports his success in his journal:

[Dracula] warmed up to the subject wonderfully... He grew excited as he spoke, and walked about the room pulling his great white moustache and grasping anything on which he laid his hands as though he would crush it by main strength. (37)

The impression is created that Dracula genuinely enjoys this chance to discuss his country with an intelligent and admiring foreigner. But his apparent spontaneity in this scene is also an act, for he knows that Jonathan is upset about the mirror scene. By rewarding Jonathan's compliant behavior with his own "charming host" behavior, he is subtly encouraging Jonathan to continue compliance. In order to do so successfully, Jonathan must develop in his own mind an image or vision of Dracula and Dracula's world as Dracula wishes it to be seen, so that he will not inadvertently step outside it and trigger some other behavior. When more of Jonathan's energy has been channeled into inventing this Vision and making it vivid, than into resisting it and developing his own vision, Jonathan will gradually perceive Dracula's vision as more real than his own.

Jonathan never reaches this state, but Dracula does develop some power to control his actions and perceptions with his eyes. The psychological explanation may be that in the course of their interaction, Jonathan has learned look to the Count's eyes for directions about what he may or may not do. Unconsciously he has transferred control of his moods and intentions from his own will to Dracula's, expressed in his eyes. Hence, when with great daring, Jonathan

gains access to the Count's room and finds Dracula's encoffined body, a "look of hate" from the dead and unconscious eyes has the power to prevent him from searching him for keys (59). The power is not absolute, and when Jonathan returns later, more desperate, he manages to search the body, but finds no key. Then noticing that the Count is bloated with new blood (of a child Jonathan had heard whimpering in the night), he seizes a shovel with righteous anger and attempts to strike him.

But as I did so the head turned, and the eyes fell upon me, with all their blaze of basilisk horror. The sight seemed to paralyze me, and the shovel turned in my hand and glanced from the face, merely making a deep gash above the forehead. (63)

The battle of wills between the two is thus dramatized: Jonathan can begin but not end the action forbidden by Dracula's eyes.

Jonathan in fact resists quite vigorously and intelligently but still falls below Dracula in their trials. In one crucial scene, Jonathan tests the limits to which he can exploit Dracula's public pose as courteous host. Challenging Dracula's decree that he shall leave the next day (knowing indeed that the Vampire Ladies will claim him then), Jonathan insists that he will leave that very night and walk to the Pass if the carriage is not available. He perceives in his own vision that Dracula must permit him to go or use open force to keep him, but Dracula quickly alters that perception. He outwardly consents and begins opening the doors, but simultaneously uses his mind-powers to summon wolves. As Jonathan stands watching, the wolves surge against the opening door and only Dracula's body is between him and them. Seeing that Dracula will cheerfully feed him to the wolves unless he capitulates, Jonathan delays until the last possible moment, and then cries out, "Shut the door! I shall wait until morning!" He weeps openly at his defeat. But Dracula acts the part of a saviour within his own distorted vision, and leads him courteously away, with "a red light of triumph in his eyes, and with a smile that Judas in Hell might be proud of" (61).

Jonathan's open weeping might easily be mistaken as a sign that his vision is yet independent, but in fact it demonstrates precisely the opposite -- that Jonathan has temporarily fallen into Dracula's Vision. He does act precisely along the lines which Dracula's Eye prescribes, and does not seem to perceive other options. Dracula wanted Jonathan to give up the idea of leaving that night, *because* he perceived that Dracula would allow the wolves to eat him, *but without admitting that he perceived it*. In other words, he wanted his victim to perceive compulsion and freedom at the same time. Since that vision is self-contradictory and destructive to the human mind, no human could accept it without pain. Hence Jonathan's tears. It could be argued that in his submission, Jonathan is reverting to rational play-acting in order to gain time. However, Jonathan does not play-act very well when he weeps. A truly rational bit of play-acting would have been to invent *some other reason* apart from the wolves, not to leave that night. Jonathan might have said, "On second thought, Count, I need my baggage after all." This would have impelled Dracula back into his courteous-host role while ironically signaling Jonathan's independence. But distracted by fear of death, Jonathan sees his options with Dracula's eyes at this moment, and weeps.

The condition does not last, however, and Jonathan risks death the next day to escape Dracula's castle. He winds up in a sanatorium in Budapest, with brain fever, utterly confused about the reality or unreality of his experience (114-15). Meanwhile, the help he gave Dracula during his compliance has made it easier for Dracula to reach England and ensnare other victims.

These victims, both female, are approached first in trance states, so we cannot trace the beginnings of the Vampire influence on them. We can, however, assume that the influence he exercises over them is like his influence over Jonathan, except for being stronger, since for the women the Vampire temptations of terror and sexual allure are concentrated into the figure of Dracula, where for Jonathan they were distributed among Dracula and his Ladies. Like Jonathan, both women respond to Dracula's red eyes as if they compelled obedience. The stealthy origin of the bond makes it possible to hide Dracula's unconscious control of his victims much more completely. Gentle Lucy Westenra, whom her friend Mina fears, "is of too super-sensitive a nature to get through the world without trouble" (101-2), goes down without even knowing what hit her. Dracula gets her under his hypnotic control during a sleeping-walking episode, and soon she is suffering from a mysterious illness. She makes no connection between it and her first encounter with Dracula, which she does not recognize the approach of a tyrant anyway. All she can tell Mina about it is:

I had a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes... and something very sweet and very bitter around me all at once; then I seemed to be sinking into deep green water... my soul seemed to go out of my body and float in the air. (112) *Italics mine*

Some part of her, however, does remember meeting a man, and this causes her to say, in a disjointed way "his red eyes" (109) at sunset one day.

But though Lucy's concerned fiancé finally brings in Dr. Abraham Van Helsing with his knowledge of Vampires, the measures they take to save her fall short of Dracula's to subdue her. The turning point in her decline, annulling all their efforts, is an episode not of allure but of terrorization. Dracula uses his mind-powers to drive a wolf to break the garlic-protected window which Van Helsing has placed there to keep him out (162). Lucy is in bed with her ailing mother; the sight of the wolf gives the latter a heart-attack, and she dies. Lucy calls out for Dr. Seward, whom she expects to be in the next room, but he is not. Terror-stricken, "alone with the dead" (162) as she puts it, Lucy faces Dracula's attack once more. The inexorable return of the tyrant into a scene from which everything good is departed, finally breaks her will and destroys her resistance to the Vampire vision. The next day she does not rally at Van Helsing's ministrations as she had before. She dies shortly, and while doing so, she fluctuates between a Vampire-consciousness and an ordinary Lucy-consciousness. Waking, she clutches to her throat the garlic flowers which repel Vampires; sleeping, she thrusts them away. Waking, she composes a detailed letter explaining everything she can remember about her illness, in order to exonerate her friends of any blame in her death; sleeping, she tries to tear it up. Waking, she thanks Van Helsing for protecting her fiancé Arthur (181) from the "voluptuous" Vampire kiss she offers him in her trance state, a kiss which would have

drawn him after her into Vampirization (181, 239). Dead, she becomes one of Dracula's Vampire-slaves, and her fiancé must, at Van Helsing's directions, ritually mutilate her body to set her free.

The victim in whose mind the battle is most thoroughly fought and won is Wilhelmina or Mina Harker, now Jonathan's wife. She combines Lucy's sweetness with Jonathan's resilience. She is quite self-aware, an inveterate journal-writer (124-5). Due to these analytical tendencies, she has less trouble than Lucy in recapturing the dream-state in waking life. Though like Lucy, Mina is first approached in her sleep, and she does not at first recognize the encounters for what they are, she recalls from the first dream "a livid white face bending over me from out of the mist" (288), not just "something" as Lucy had seen. When Dracula resorts to the violent Vampire baptism, in which she is forced to drink some of his blood (313), she manages to give a full account of the scene to her husband and the company, braving their periodic exclamations of revulsion and horror. She is even able to declare that when Count was holding her "I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on his victim" (318). Her own admission of susceptibility to Vampire allure is a key to the success of her resistance.

Mina still is subject to Dracula's control of her trance-state, and as the story advances, she cannot by her own will prevent her own Vampirization in small ways. Van Helsing is the first to notice subtle changes: "Her teeth are some sharper, and at times her eyes are more hard" (357). She sleeps more and more during the day (371, 372, 402, 405) and stays awake at night, in imitation of the Vampire manner (400, 402, 403). During these Vampire states, she ceases writing in her journal (400). The consecrated Host which Van Helsing touches to her forehead to protect her, burns her and gives her a red scar, as it would a Vampire (329).

But Mina also takes the lead in the resistance to Dracula in his vision. She demands that the others agree to kill her when they believe that she is irreversibly Vampirized. She requires them to read the burial service to give them resolve and remind them that death can be friendly, not a horror as in Dracula's eyes (367). She also instructs the company not to tell her their plans because Dracula can get them from her by their hypnotic bond (358), and not to leave her behind, because Dracula will find some way to use her against them (362). This admission of her weakness prompts Van Helsing to exclaim, "Oh, but her soul is true. It is to her an agony to tell us so much as she has done" (362). With her help -- and in knowing when they can and cannot trust her -- they are able to hunt down and destroy Dracula just a moment before he regains the refuge of his castle. As soon as he is dead, the red scar made by the Host on Mina's forehead completely disappears (416). She and Jonathan live happily for at least seven years afterwards.

Thus the successful strategy against Dracula demanded not only that the characters understand and reject his perverted vision, but also that they recognize their susceptibility to it, and in effect outwit themselves in the process of destroying it. The same is true of the conflict against evil in *The Lord of the Rings*.

## Sauron

Compared to Sauron, however, Dracula is a warm and likable character. It is in their uses of their Eyes and Vision, in which the two of them are so similar, that the differences between them become the most pronounced. As demonstrated above, because Dracula's use of his eyes is so important in dominating his victims, it is his eyes they remember best, and frequently, when he materializes from the mist, his eyes appear first. Once he materializes first as a single red eye which later separates into two eyes (288).

But Sauron appears as a single Red Eye not once but always. For him the Eye is not merely a source of power, it is himself. All his psychic energies which used to animate his body, have gone into his Eye. Sauron is first introduced, as "the eye of the dark power which rules the ring" (I, 56). The Ring, his invention, is a conduit for the Eye's powers and is early felt by Bilbo as an eye watching him (I, 43). Sauron's mind is revealed as an Eye in Galadriel's mirror (I, 379), where Frodo sees it looking for him, and later on Amon Hen where it almost finds him. The Eye is constantly alluded to throughout the trilogy as a symbol for Sauron, accompanied by many epithets, including "Lidless Eye" (III, 96) "Red Eye" (II, 18, 54) "Great Eye" (II, 49, 55), "Eye of Barad-dûr" (II, 194), and "Evil Eye," (III, 165). That his single abstract Eye, out of facial context, remains consistently Sauron's chief and most characteristic signature, reveals that his will has immolated all other physical and mental capacities for the sake of this power of seeing into others' minds and imposing vision on them. Unlike Dracula, he has completely lost his body, "in the wreck of Numenor," surviving only "as a spirit of hatred borne on a dark wind" (III, 317). Unable to take "a form that seemed fair to men" (III, 317), he can now only terrorize. Dracula's ability to embody himself in human and animal form beyond the appearance of his Eye correlates with his ability to use sensation and instinct to weaken the will so that he can dominate. Sauron's bodilessness correlates with a greatly lessened ability to seduce by instinct, and a greater need to weaken pleasure in order to destroy the will.

Dracula was, for Van Helsing and his company, motivated by "selfishness" (379), willing to absorb the lives of others and dominate them in order to maintain an existence which he found pleasurable but to which he no longer had a right. His attitude was offensive to the moral nature of man, but perfectly compatible with the instinctual nature of animals. As Van Helsing says of Dracula, "he is brute and more than brute" (264). Hence Dracula can use nature on his side against Van Helsing's party. He can control "the elements: the storm, the fog, the thunder" and also animal life: "the rat, the owl, and the bat -- the moth and the fox, and the wolf" (265).

But Sauron's evil destroys even ordinary selfishness. His Wraiths do not cling to their physical existence through wicked pleasure, but "until every last minute is a weariness" (I, 56). Their brand of evil is perversely self-contradicting, hating what it desires and rejecting what it wants. Tolkien conveys this vividly in a number of passages. The Nazgul's cries are "evil and lonely" (I, 100). One of their few remaining senses is the power to smell the blood within the veins of living creatures, which they "desire" and "hate" (I, 202). The Barrow-wight, an "evil spirit" or wraith associated with the chief

Ringwraith (II, 321), gives a cry in which "The night was railing against the morning of which it was bereaved, and the cold was cursing the warmth for which it hungered" (I, 151).

Being so weak in instinct, Sauron and his wraiths cannot stir up the elements or lower animals in their support merely because they are irrational. On the contrary it is the Elves who can stimulate and inspire nature on their side, insofar as it is still natural; Elrond causes a flood, for example. Insofar as nature is personified in the Ents, it has motives of its own and chooses to fight against Sauron's Vision (II, 64-90).

Sauron must weaken nature before it will serve him. He has no elements for allies except the ones he artificially tampers with, such as the smoggy wind which puts Minas Tirith and Mordor into darkness during the crisis of the war, only to be blown aside at significant moments by the true elemental wind (III, 45, 193). He has for allies not the "meaner" animals, but only the "evil" ones, perhaps (though not clearly) those bred in his programs. Frodo says "All other animals are terrified when [the Ringwraiths] draw near... The dogs howl and the geese scream at them" (234). A good deal of nature must die in this "taming" process, even when Sauron does not destroy deliberately. Mordor is choked with what resembles industrial pollution, a "desolation... diseased beyond all healing" (II, 239). The parts through which the protagonists travel are so strikingly bare of life that Samwise is astonished to find even thorns growing there. "Bless me, Mr. Frodo, but I didn't know as anything grew in Mordor!" he cries (III, 194).

Having lost natural instincts, Sauron and his wraiths cannot form bonds with one another not directly related to domination and submission. Control cannot be forgotten even for an instant in animal pleasures. Thus the wraiths lack the residual affection which Dracula and his slaves have for one another. Nazgul exist only to express Sauron's "will and his malice" which is "filled with evil and horror" (III, 97), and when the Sauron is destroyed, they apparently disappear altogether with the other evil beings who "run hither and thither mindless" (III, 227).

Since he lacks ordinary selfishness, what was for Dracula at least partly a means to pleasure, has become an end in itself to Sauron. His one remaining instinct or goal is to destroy the natural, individual vision of his victims, imposing his own corrupted vision upon them and holding them, tormented, within it. It becomes a passion for him. At least once he yields to it in a manner that damages his cause, in fact destroying his one chance at a quick and easy victory. This is when Pippin steals the Palantir. Gandalf explains how narrowly the quest has been saved:

If he had questioned you, then and there, almost certainly you would have told all that you knew, to the ruin of us all. But he was too eager. He did not want information only: he wanted you quickly, so that he could deal with you in the Dark Tower, slowly. (II, 199)

Sauron was not always this alienated, nor was his brand of evil always this clearly perverse and self-contradictory. In fact the indication is that he was once more like Dracula. The Ring survives from the time when he had more power to allure. Without it,

he cannot regain control of Middle-Earth. The Ring adds a further refinement to Tolkien's treatment of evil.

The Ring, in fact, tempts to "selfishness," though not always Dracula's kind of selfishness. It does not always tempt with instinctual pleasure. It does tempt each character to use its powers of compulsion to gain the moment, at the expense of everyone else's concern and right to be persuaded. Gandalf fears it will appeal to him through "pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good," (I, 71). Samwise, the gardener, is tempted at the prospect of making all Mordor into a garden (III, 177), while Gollum sees himself as a well fed petty tyrant honored by those around him: "Lord Smeagol? Gollum the Great? The Gollum! Eat fish every day, three times a day, fresh from the Sea," (II, 241). At the beginning, each character sees his desires as good, but in assenting to use force, he somewhat destroys his own perceptiveness and his power to recognize and honor the good done by others. The more insensitive he becomes, the more he must resort to compulsion, until like Sauron he lacks the capacity to understand anything else but power. We see this process of degeneration in Saruman. Talking to Gandalf, Saruman claims to have good motives, seeing the Ring as a shortcut for doing good when "the Elves and dying Numeror," (272) cannot succeed. "We must have power, power to order all things as we will, for the good only the Wise can see," (I, 272) he says. He implies that he shares the Vision of the Wise about what is to be done, but in fact, of the five members of the Council Council of the Wise, Saruman has just called one "simple" (Radagast), stated there is no help in two (Elrond and Galadriel) and threatened to torture the fourth (Gandalf) if he will not immediately join his side. By wisdom, he now means his own vision. He wishes to impose it on others with the Ring. Being, like Dracula, younger in evil, Saruman has more powers of seduction than Sauron, centered in his Voice. But powers of persuasion atrophy in the Vision of Domination, and Saruman's powers of Voice become weaker as the story progresses. As Gandalf points out "He cannot be both tyrant and counselor," (II, 190).



Sauron is depicted from Ring from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954)

Ultimately Saruman turns the Shire into something Frodo describes as "Mordor" (III, 297), and Saruman dies directly as a result of trying to use raw compulsion on the wretched Wormtongue.

The Ring, thus, does not act directly to subject its possessor to Sauron's vision. It tempts its victims, in fact, to rivalry with him. But it can be useful to him all the same. In accepting a vision involving domination, the tempted characters move themselves onto ground where Sauron is preeminent. Sauron has every skill to manipulate those visions and draw them subtly into conformity with his own, and then dominate them within it because he is strongest there. Yet a stronger and wiser character might develop a Vision of Domination yet more comprehensive than Sauron's and dominate him within it. Gandalf, Elrond and Galadriel suppose themselves capable of this, but fear it as much as a victory by Sauron and therefore refuse to take the Ring.

Thus the inner struggle in the characters who resist Sauron is different from that in those who resist Dracula. The former were fighting a one-front war against Dracula's Vision, but the latter, at the same time they are fighting off Sauron's Vision, must fight to keep their own true Visions free of the Ring's subtle corruption. It is the struggle against the personal Ring-generated vision which proves most treacherous.

Many characters are tempted by the Ring and the Eye in *The Lord of the Rings*, but Frodo's conflict is treated in the most detail. When the story begins, the Ring has already gained control of some parts of Frodo's mind. When Gandalf tells him its tremendous peril, he wishes to destroy it, but is unable even to act out the intention (I, 70). Still, in the early chapters of the trilogy the Ring's main role is to open Frodo's mind to Sauron's barren and cruel Vision, an action which is accelerated when the Ring arranges his stabbing by the Morgul blade on Weathertop (I, 208). With difficulty he resists the encroaching vision, in the which the natural world becomes "pale and empty" (I, 244) and only the threatening Ringwraiths are "dark and solid" (I, 225). Part of his resistance involves invoking beautiful names outside Sauron's Vision: Elbereth and Luthien the Fair. (I, 226). Somehow this helps delay the Eye's progress long enough for Elrond's flood to rescue him.

Frodo emerges from Elrond's healing strengthened. His true insight and Vision have actually increased because of the exercise it has had in resisting in evil. But at the same time conceptions planted in his mind by the Sauronic Vision assert themselves and influence his behavior. We first see this when Bilbo asks Frodo to show him the Ring again:

Slowly [Frodo] drew [the Ring] out.... To his distress and amazement he found that he was no longer looking at Bilbo; a shadow seemed to have fallen between them, and through it he found himself eyeing a little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony groping hands. He felt a desire to strike him. (I, 244)

Images such as these from this Sauronic Vision are difficult to root out because they are not wholly false, only distorted. Bilbo really has taken on some of Gollum's irresistible lust for the Ring, and even starts calling the Ring "my precious" (I, 42). What is temporarily blocked from Frodo's perception is Bilbo's

effective resistance to the Ring.

Another element enters here. The desire to strike Bilbo is a Sauronic response, not one belonging to Frodo's usually fair and compassionate personality. It is called up by the corrupted vision, which tends to produce a set of reactions all its own, belonging to an embryonic Dark Lord personality which struggles with the personality Frodo has consciously chosen, for control of Frodo. The struggle between the Ring-generated and the "free" personality parallels the struggle in Lucy and Mina between the true personality and the Vampire personality. In Smeagol-Gollum, the two personalities become separate enough to argue out loud with one another. In Frodo this never happens; the embryonic Dark Lord personality shares many memories, responses and affections with the "free" personality, but is always trying to corrupt them and draw them toward a Vision of Domination.

The closer Frodo draws to Mordor, the less energy he has left to develop his vision, and the more Sauron's Vision increases in his mind, thus aiding the Frodo's Dark Lord personality. The development of Frodo's Dark Lord personality is also accelerated by the appearance of Gollum. Gollum could bring out the Dark Lord in almost anyone. His "free" personality is too weak to be trusted. Since he is already dominated by the Ring, using the Ring to control him is an obvious expedient, one which Smeagol himself proposes, demanding to swear his loyalty on "the precious" (II, 225). But once Frodo undertakes to enforce this oath, he becomes a Dark Lord to Gollum, and Sam begins to perceive elements of the Dark Lord in him without quite understanding what he is seeing. In one case, he describes a scene,

For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog. (II, 225)

It is in Sauron's vision, not in that of the Fellowship, that the holder of power is a great lord hiding his power, and the subject commanded is dehumanized. The aura of brightness about the scene suggests the purity which still adheres to Frodo's character even in the midst of attack, but it should be noted that all Ring-seduced characters see their causes as pure in the early stages of temptation.

Though as they continue, Frodo treats Smeagol-Gollum with almost heroic courtesy and benevolence, he is forced to resort to the Ring twice more to control him. Once he grimly declares that he has the power to put on the Ring and command Smeagol to leap from a cliff, and he would obey because "the Precious mastered you long ago" (II, 248).

On another occasion, Frodo threatens to use the Ring to induce Gollum to choke on fishbones.

'Smeagol!' said Frodo desperately. 'Precious will be angry. I shall take Precious, and I shall say: make him swallow the bones and choke. Never taste fish again. Come, Precious is waiting (II, 296)

At a later stage, the Dark Lord personality also infects Frodo's relationship with Sam, who is transformed in vision when he tries to help Frodo by offering to continue to carry the Ring for a while.



'No, no!' cried Frodo, snatching the Ring and chain from Sam's hands. 'No you won't, you thief!' He panted, staring at Sam with eyes wide with fear and enmity.

Though repentance immediately succeeds, Frodo has now, as never before, acted on a Sauronic Vision instead of merely seeing it. He further explains that the Eye has got him almost where it wants him, stripped of all his natural perceptions apart from what the Eye and Ring give him:

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. (III, 215)

This parallels the time when Lucy was "alone with the dead." Frodo has temporarily lost use of the creative powers of his imagination to beat off Sauron's vision. Because his own Dark Lord vision is weaker than Sauron's, his yielding to it makes him more susceptible to Sauron's Eye. As a foreshadowing of his final failure on Mount Doom, Frodo even loses his ability to control the movement of his hand toward the Ring when he meets the Eye. His hand moves toward the Ring, and he cries, 'Help me, Sam! Help me, Sam! Hold my hand! I can't stop it.' (III, 220)

Frodo defeats Sauron finally by a means far more subtle and intricate than Mina did. As he is making the final ascent to Mount Doom, he is attacked by Gollum, and repelling him with the use of the Ring, once more stands to him as a Dark Lord. There he cries out a doom to him:

'Down, down!' he gasped, clutching his hand to his breast, so that beneath the cover of his leather shirt he clasped the Ring. 'Down, you creeping thing, and out of my path!....' 'Begone, and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom.' (III, 221)

Here his Dark Lord persona is still acting with much input from the true personality. He could have, had he wished, destroyed Gollum then and there, commanding him to jump off a precipice (there were plenty around), as he had previously threatened. But his compassion causes him to restrain that tyrannical impulse and make Gollum's death contingent on his continued evil behavior. The uneasy compromise struck between Frodo's two struggling personalities is also shown in the words with which Frodo departs on his final stretch to Mount Doom: "On Mount Doom, doom shall fall."

Though grandiose, and thus appropriate to the Dark Lord personality, these words are quite ambiguous. What doom will fall? The doom of the Ring? But as the story's opening showed, not even the true personality of Frodo can easily resolve to destroy the Ring. The doom of the quest? But his long hesitation at the Crack of Doom shows that Frodo did not go there intending to claim the Ring; in fact if he had intended to claim it then, he should have gone somewhere else. No, clearly there was inner struggle in Frodo up until that very moment when he announced that the Ring was his. Up until that point Frodo's "good" personality was able to keep Frodo

walking toward the Crack of Doom, no matter what else he did, but at the cost of concealing from himself exactly what he was supposed to do there. He was only able to express the intention of throwing the Ring into the fire by setting it upon Gollum, in the words implied but not spoken in his doom: "You shall yourself [in addition to what?] to the Ring of course" be cast into the Fire of Doom." So obsessed was the Dark Lord personality by its sadistic desire to impose its will upon Gollum that it did not notice these implications. At at the Crack of Doom, when the decision to destroy the Ring or not can no longer be put off, and the will of the good personality at last falls before the Sauronic one, this oblique stroke wins. For then Gollum and his conditional doom take over. Having seized the Ring, Gollum is "cast" into the fire by those parts of his mind which are subjected to it, much as Jonathan's hand had been turned by the parts of his mind which had put themselves at the command of Dracula's Eye. The effect may perhaps be something like post-hypnotic suggestion; Frodo's earlier threat to make Gollum choke on fishbones shows that he understood the Ring's power to cause accidents as well as compel conscious obedience.

Once the Ring is destroyed, Frodo's original personality regains control. Like Mina, he is never blamed for his partial absorption into evil, only honored for his valiant part in the quest. Unlike Mina, however, he is not completely free. He is no longer in danger from Sauron's Eye, but his Dark Lord personality remains and torments him. He is found at times mourning the loss of the Ring: "it is gone for ever... and now all is dark and empty," (III, 304). He cries "I am wounded... wounded; it will never really heal" (III, 305, ). He must seek insight beyond Middle-Earth to bring his perceptions of evil back into balance with his perceptions of good, and so he goes to the Blessed Realm for healing. Samwise, far less drawn into the evil vision than Frodo though not wholly unaffected by it, is the one who can return happily to ordinary life, his insight and gusto both increased by what he has gone through, and his happiness a foreshadowing of the hope there is for Middle Earth.

#### Conclusion

There is a haunting similarity between these tyrants, Sauron and Dracula, and an ominous difference. Both Sauron and Dracula present visions of Hell and a kind of damnation on earth. They put characters in danger not merely of their lives, but their souls, and no quick and easy way out of the conflict is offered. Mina thinks of suicide, but is warned that this would precipitate rather than prevent her Vampirization (323). Frodo would like to throw away the Ring, but is told that keeping it and guarding it from Sauron is a morally more responsible tactic, despite its spiritual dangers for him. Both, thus, offer a vision in which the struggle for salvation is presented in earthly terms, is made emotionally significant, and the consequences of its failure are all but unbearable to contemplate. Also, for victory, innocence is not enough; the characters must struggle both bravely and cleverly, outwitting the evil parts of themselves and strategically exploiting not only their strengths but their weaknesses as well. So far the works are similar, and both seem to reflect increasingly sophisticated questioning of the relationship between perception and moral responsibility. But in the later work, though the power of personal resistance is emphasized more, the evil is crueler, darker, more ambitious, harder to

continued on page 56

## Bibliography

(In order of appearance in the text of the article.)

- J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Hobbit* London, Allen and Unwin, 1937; Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1938.
- Arthur Ransome: *We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea* London, Cape, 1937; New York, Macmillan, 1938.
- Eve Garnett: *The Family from One End Street and Some of Their Adventures* London, Muller, 1937; New York, Vanguard Press, 1939.
- Kate Seredy: *The Good Master* New York, Viking Press, 1935; London, Harrop, 1937.
- Noel Streatfeild: *Tennis Shoes* London, Dent, 1937; New York, Random House, 1938.
- L.A.G. Strong: *The Fifth of November* London, Dent, 1937.
- J.B.S. Haldane: *My Friend Mr. Leaky* London, Cresset Press, 1937; New York, Harper, 1938.
- C.S. Lewis: *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*. Edited by Walter Hooper. London, Bles, 1966; New York, Harcourt Brace, 1967.
- Nick Ott: *The Structuralist's Guide to Middle-earth in J.R.R. Tolkien: This Far Land* edited by Robert Giedings. London, Vision Press, 1983; New Jersey, Barnes and Noble, 1984.
- J.R.R. Tolkien: *Farmer Giles of Ham* London, Allen and Unwin, 1949; Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1950.
- Kenneth Grahame: *The Reluctant Dragon in Dream Days* London and New York, Lane, 1898.
- Noel Langley: *The Tale of the Land of the Green Ginger* London, Arthur Baker, 1937.
- K.T. Candler: *From Seven to Eight* London, Bodley Head, 1937.
- Geoffrey Mure: *Josephine: A Fairy Thriller* London, Oxford University Press, 1937.
- Sir James and Lady Frazer: *Pasha the Pom* London, Blackie, 1937; Philadelphia, McKay, 1937.
- J.W. Dunne: *The Jumping Lions of Bernece* London, Faber, 1937.
- George Wright: *The Adventures of Dan the Dog Detective* London, Allen and Unwin, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *More About Dan* London, Allen and Unwin, 1934.
- J.R.R. Tolkien: *On Fairy Stories in Essays Presented to Charles Williams* London, Oxford University Press, 1947.
- Winifride Woodcock: *By Aerial to Fairyland* London, Burns Oates, 1937.
- Stella Gibbons: *The Untidy Gnome* London and New York, Longmans, 1935.
- Patricia Lynch: *The Turfcutter's Donkey* London, Dent, 1934; New York, Dutton, 1935.
- J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Cottage of Lost Play in The Book of Lost Tales Part I* London, Allen and Unwin 1983; Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1984.
- Ella Young: *The Unicorn with Silver Shoes* London and New York, Longmans, 1942.
- P.M. Travers: *Mary Poppins* London, Howe, 1934; New York, Reynal, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Mary Poppins Comes Back* London, Dickson and Thompson, 1935; New York, Reynal, 1935.
- Hugh Lofting: *The Story of Dr. Dolittle* New York, Stokes, 1920; London, Cape, 1922.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle* New York, Stokes, 1922; London, Cape, 1923.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle's Post Office* New York, Stokes, 1923; London, Cape, 1924.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle's Circus* New York, Stokes, 1924; London, Cape, 1925.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle's Zoo* New York, Stokes, 1925; London, Cape, 1926.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle's Caravan* New York, Stokes, 1926; London, Cape, 1927.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle's Garden* New York, Stokes, 1927; London, Cape, 1928.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle in the Moon* New York, Stokes, 1928; London, Cape, 1929.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Dr. Dolittle's Return* New York, Stokes, 1933; London, Cape, 1933.
- John Masefield: *The Midnight Folk* London, Heinemann, 1927; New York, Macmillan, 1927.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *The Box of Delights, or When the Wolves Were Running* London, Heinemann, 1935; New York, Macmillan, 1935.
- Barbara Euphan Todd: *Worzel Gummidge or The Scarecrow of Scatterbrook* London, Burns Oates, 1936.
- \_\_\_\_\_ : *Worzel Gummidge Again* London, Burns Oates, 1937.
- P.A. Wyke-Smith: *The Marvellous Land of Snergs* London, Benn, 1927.

continued from page 17

eradicating, and not less tempting to the characters for all that. Alas, the later work seems to have more plausibility on its side; between the two books lies the dark chasm of the two world wars and the present threat of nuclear annihilation. It is amusing but also somewhat shocking to perceive that Stoker in 1897 just did not imagine that evil could be so evil, or that so many souls as Tolkien imagines could sell themselves into a state so negative and self-contradictory. Indeed, the nightmare of modern civilization has deepened.

On the brighter side, the sweet dream is sweeter, since Lorien and Valinor are more idyllic and grander than the domestic happiness achieved by Mina and Jonathan, pleasant though that was. The very desperation also adds a note of hope, since just as the acts of Frodo's true personality continued to affect the outcome of the quest even after it had capitulated to the Dark Lord personality, so could ours. Entanglement in evil does not prevent a character's good acts from intertwining with a Providential pattern to produce a good result. So, no matter how deep the nightmare gets, we still all have our motives to keep on our journey through Middle-earth, with Elbereth and Luthien the Fair firmly in mind, and a friend nearby to hold our hands when we reach convulsively for that Ring.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. 1879; New York: Dell, 1965.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings*. Collector's Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

continued from page 48

the swordsmen Istvan Di Vega. Sword and Sorcery, in the Robert E. Howard tradition, is a much-maligned genre today; and it can indeed inspire the shoddiest kind of commercial fantasy, yet in its celebration of individual bravery and endurance in the face of darkness it has roots in the sagas and epics of the ancient world, and it cannot be separated from the history of Fantasy literature as a whole. Paul Zimmer (like Howard at his best) is clearly in tune with the heroic philosophy that gives life to such stories, and willing to put some stylistic effort into expressing it. He makes much use of discreet alliteration and metric prose (I am sensitized to this, perhaps, by having heard the author read aloud from his work on many occasions): in some passages the writing is overdone and falls short of the mark, but in others it is strikingly effective. There is, in the descriptions of physical combat, a sensuality, grace and precision which I have found in no other writer. It is indeed fortunate that the heroic fantasy genre, with its many inherent limitations, should have a modern exponent of this stature.