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## Light & Dark

J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, always has good and evil characters. He uses various techniques to show what is evil, and what is good. The best method, in my opinion, is that of light and dark.

Throughout his stories, Tolkien uses light to represent the good of Middle-Earth. For example, fire is a friend in the wilderness to the Company. Fire helps to drive away the night. When the Company enters Moria it is "deadly dark", and Gandalf uses his magic to show a faint light from his staff. It was not a bright light, but it was light in the darkness, and led them through the Mines of Moria. At the Bridge of Khazad-dûm there is a battle of light and dark. Gandalf holds the bridge against the Balrog, a wielder of the **dark** fire- flame of Udûn. While Gandalf is a servant of the Secret Fire, a wielder of the flame of Anor. In this section we see that Tolkien uses light to represent good, which is Gandalf, and dark to represent evil, which is the Balrog. Gandalf is seen as "a wizened tree before the onset of a storm", yet he triumphs in the end. Another place where Tolkien uses light to represent goodness is in Lothlórien, the sacred forest of the Galadrim. The leaves of the mallorn are golden, and the blooms of the elanor are also golden. The entire land emanates light, and even in the darkness of night light still shines bright. While the Company stays in Lothlórien, Tolkien describes the brilliancy of the stars. In the Two Towers, the Aragorn ever looks with hope for the dawn. Gamling, one of the Riders, despairs that dawn will bring them any aid, but Aragorn steadfastly waits for the dawn and the hope it will bring.

Tolkien uses darkness to represent evil throughout his stories. The **Black** Riders are covered in darkness, they cannot see but they smell their way around. The true visage of the Riders can only be seen when Frodo puts on the Ring. With these characters, Tolkien uses blackness to emanate their vileness. They are described as riding black horses, and when they attack the hobbits and Strider on Weathertop, they do so in the dark of night. The Balrog of Moria is another character that is described in terms of darkness.

"Something was coming up from behind them. What it was could not be seen: it was like a great shadow, in middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape

maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it.

It came to the fire and the light faded as if a cloud had bent over it. Then with a rush it leaped across the fissure. The flames roared up to greet it, and wreathed about it; and a black smoke swirled in the air. Its streaming mane kindled, and blazed behind it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs."

Here we have an evil character who triumphs over fire, his shadow prevails over light, and its sword "is like a stabbing tongue of fire". Later in the story orcs attack the Company, during the cover of night. In Two Towers, the enemies of the Free Peoples create dark clouds that darken the sky like "the twilight under endless trees".

One theme that Tolkien constantly portrays with this trait of light and dark; light always prevails. On Weathertop, the riders are driven away by fire. The "deadly dark" is defeated by a small light emanating from the tip of Gandalf's staff. The Balrog darkens the light and is unaffected by fire, yet the light of Gandalf defeats the Balrog's blackness. The stars in Lothlórien defeat the darkness of night. And the dark clouds of the enemy are defeated by dawn, but mostly by the hope of men. For light must always triumph over dark.